# CHRIST OR MARS?

*Will Irwin*

Will Irwin
from
Will Irwin

With the injunction not to ~~loan~~ lend or to give away.

# CHRIST OR MARS?

# CHRIST OR MARS?

BY

WILL IRWIN

AUTHOR OF "THE NEXT WAR," "THE LATIN AT WAR,"
"A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON," ETC., ETC.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK :: 1923 :: LONDON

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO

INEZ HAYNES IRWIN

WHOSE MIND BEST OF ALL I KNOW
KEPT ITS BALANCE AMIDST THE STORMS OF WAR

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2021 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/christormars0000unse

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Verdun, 1916 | 1 |
| II. | The Voice | 15 |
| III. | The Things That Are Cæsar's | 23 |
| IV. | The Hymn of Hate | 41 |
| V. | Keeping the Poison Active | 59 |
| VI. | What Does It Matter? | 90 |
| VII. | The Kingdom | 109 |
| VIII. | War Ceases to Pay | 117 |
| IX. | The Human Loss | 141 |
| X. | Justice between Nations | 161 |
| XI. | The Thing That Is God's | 170 |
| XII. | Pas-de-Calais, 1918 | 180 |

# CHRIST OR MARS?

## CHAPTER I

### VERDUN, 1916

To-morrow's dinner, if dinner I had at all, would find me in very different surroundings, I reflected. As for the French captain who had left me at the door of the restaurant with a cheerful "see you in the morning"! he was going back with me to Verdun not as a mere spectator, but as a participant; he might sup with Pluto. The great battle which turned the tide of war had now lasted five months, and had already killed as many men as the North lost in the Civil War. For all we could see of the future, the fierce German attacks on fort and citadel might go on through endless years, until a mere squad of survivors staggered through to unopposed victory. Instinctively you thought of an order to Verdun as a death sentence.

However, the company, now, was pleasant and congenial—a most agreeable and intelligent French couple in official life, an American couple

who, though they had lived long enough abroad to acquire the Continental point of view, retained the humor and easy cordiality of American manners. No epicure could quarrel with the smallest detail of the fare; and the restaurant, though a little stripped and chilly on first view, still radiated that atmosphere of cheerful comfort with which the French always deck out the ritual of eating. France, now mid-course of the Great War, had survived her first stage of grief, apprehension, disorganization; but was yet to live through that second stage of orderly confusion initiated by the American intervention. She had settled down to a pale imitation of her old life.

These my companions were old and valued patrons, it appeared. Wherefore the solicitous head waiter approached presently with an inquiry about the entrée, as the polite opening for a little intimate conversation.

"When are we going to have our music again?" asked the Frenchman. "That superb orchestra! The solo violinist who played so divinely that he drew your heart from your breast—what has become of him?" A murmur went round the table. Apparently all remembered that solo violinist.

"He is dead," replied the head waiter.

"Dead?" came the sympathetic, concerned echo.

The head waiter laughed. It was an unpleasant

laugh, pulling his lips back from his teeth like those of a snarling dog. Our party looked up with inquiry in their eyes.

"He was a Boche!" said the head waiter.

"Oh!"

The head waiter nodded. "But yes. His real name was Hans. Two days before the first of August, he slipped away to Germany and joined his regiment. He was killed at the Battle of the Marne. Messieurs and Mesdames, I will tell you something strange. The owner of this restaurant owns a château on the Ourcq. Before his gate, a detachment of the Boche make a stand. They are annihilated by our coffee mills. When everything is over, the proprietor sends out to bury the dead. And the first piece of German carrion they pick up—it is Hans—our dear Hans!"

Our table laughed with him now. He had spoken rather loudly; the tables to the right and left had been listening; the laughter spread. It had that same disagreeable quality—the lips drawn back from the teeth, the nostrils snarling—this requiem of Hans who once had "drawn the heart from your bosom" with his violin, and had become now merely German carrion.

Sunday morning I stood in a gully of the hills, under the guns of Verdun. From the ridge be-

hind me, our concealed heavy batteries were shaking the very sand bags of the dugouts. The gaping, insensate mouth of a tunnel opened into the hillside before me; through it lines of stretcher bearers, their clothes and hair matted with blood and dust, bore the human wreckage of war. An old barn served as a temporary dressing post; for at this point the ridges gave shelter from direct fire. Still, at least one shell shower had reached it; where the door had been was a great, irregular gash in the masonry. The puffing bearers put down their charges in mathematical rows, folded up the stretchers, plodded back to the tunnel, disappeared into its black mouth. Its other end opened on to those shell holes and trenches, in which the French were that morning holding Fleury. From that direction the rattling of machine guns punctuated the steady boom of artillery; and once the heavens seemed to open in a storm of curtain fire. Of these stolid, plodding bearers, working with the air of men who are doing simply a hard, disagreeable and somewhat boresome job, some I knew would come back on their own stretchers, some not at all. . . .

I turned back to the ragged entrance of the barn. Surgeons, as filthy and matted as the men they served, were toiling with a kind of silent, concentrated fury. As once and again they looked

my way, spared an instant of human curiosity to my strange uniform, I saw that their eyes were bloodshot and all the lines of their faces fallen. Methodically they worked down the rows. Here was an infantryman snatched so hastily from under the rain of steel that no one had given him first aid; his stretcher had stained the path from the tunnel with a trail of blood. Him they bandaged, their hands clumsy with fatigue. Another had received first aid; they simply inspected his bandages and rolled him aside to await the ambulances. Finally, there were those at whom the surgeons took one swift look; then rose up, gave each other a nod, or an expressive shrug, filled a hypodermic needle. One or another, standing beyond range of the condemned man's vision—as the officer of the execution does when he raises his sword to command the firing squad—would make an almost imperceptible gesture.

From a corner, where he had been rolling bandages, would come the chaplain, only the stole about his neck distinguishing him from the other officers. If the dying man could speak, the priest would kneel beside him; there would be a whispered interchange; you would see the hand raised in absolution. More often the man was beyond whispering; and standing, with all the authority and dignity of his

church in his pose, the chaplain would begin the last rites.

I turned back toward the door; the pungent, disturbing scent of blood was unbearably heavy in my unaccustomed nostrils. The rows of wounded had been growing; for still the artillery and machine guns shook or rattled the hills of Verdun, and still the bearers plodded in and out of the black hole with their dripping stretchers. Near the door, the sober blue line was slashed by a tinge of dull green. I looked twice before I recognized the tunic without buttons, the high, heavy boots, of a German private. I stepped over beside him. Between bandages and congealed blood, only his eyes and one side of his face were visible. These showed him to be young, blonde, thick of bone and wide of skull; it needed no uniform to classify him as a Teuton. From somewhere beneath the bandages came at long intervals a low, difficult, inarticulate moaning. Then his eyes would roll upward until the pupils disappeared under the lids. . . .

The surgeons came down the line, questioned the next man, who was talking volubly; satisfied themselves that his first-aid bandaging was sound. Only then, apparently, did they perceive that the next was a German. Hatred is an emotion which takes energy; it is impossible to weary men, while

curiosity persists to the end. Criminals on their way to the scaffold will stare at any unusual face in the crowd. The eyes of the surgeons, as they looked on him whose race began all this woe, showed no resentment but only a little wonder. They stripped his tunic open at the chest, began their examination; and I felt that they were bending backward, giving him special and minute attention.

Against his ghastly white skin lay the black slash of a crucifix, the nailed feet bathed in a rivulet of blood. At last, they straightened up, and one flashed to the other that fatal, despairing shake of the head. The priest approached. I saw him start slightly as he recognized the uniform. I know not if they had any common speech for a confession; however, this penitent was beyond speech. The priest raised his hand in benediction, began the last rites.

I was out in the air now. Tainted as it was with the prick of burning explosive, the stink of long-exploded gas shells, I drew it into my lungs like the ozone of the Rockies. The machine guns had stopped their continuous rattle. In the spaces between the booming of heavy cannon, came a strange sound—the chord of an organ, slight, reedlike, but solemn. Down the face of the hill ran a buttress of sand bags with a deeply cut,

recessed door and window. The sight of the bright June heavens recalled to me what might fall therefrom at any moment; I found myself crouching as I crossed the road. Behind this buttress was a long dugout, crowded with uniformed men silhouetted by a dim, far light. As I looked, the tiny field organ stopped and the men before me fell to their knees, revealing a little altar with its four candles, the back of the priest. Then I saw nearest of all two Germans, one with a bandaged forehead—by all signs, prisoners taken only that morning. Beside them, the butts of their bayonetted rifles resting on the floor, knelt their guards.

My mind, flashing rapidly, vividly from impression to impression as minds in battle will, returned to that scene in the restaurant only two long days ago. At least, I thought, one force in this world stood like a rock against the tide of unreasoned, ulcerous hatred begotten of the World War. Christianity did not laugh because Hans the violinist was dead. To his soul, with those of the embattled Frenchmen dying that morning behind the tunnel of Fleury, it offered a common haven. Into that Calvary of the battered old barn, into this sacred spot behind the sand bags, entered something so holy as to absorb the poisons of hate. Then my mind made another rapid

shift. It was eleven o'clock of Sunday morning. At that moment, my American couple were doubtless at the American church in the Avenue D'Alma, my French couple at their own Catholic church. The Protestants, here as elsewhere the world over, would listen to the prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, the Catholics to the supplication "Graciously give peace in our days." These old prayers of the Christian Church would be as lost as though unsaid upon my companions of that dinner in Paris. Indeed, that very morning a thousand German and Austrian pulpits would thunder denunciation of the French and English, would bid the Christian sons of Teutonia slay in the name of God and spare not; and a thousand French and British pulpits would turn back this pious command upon the heads of the enemy. Any thinking child adjusting himself as a friendly, newly arrived foreigner to the complexities and contradictions of this puzzling world, has wondered why killing in peace is a sin so supreme and blighting that one mentions it only in awed whispers, while killing in war is not only a duty but a consecrated and glorious act. Use and custom rather than reason had reconciled me, along with the rest, to this contradiction. But now—the clear sight of childhood returned.

Then an explosion lighter than the rest, but

with a sinister sharpness, puffed a geyser of dust from the hillside. We were under fire again. As we hurried to cover in the Colonel's dugout, all further thought yielded to the instinct of self-preservation.

Yet the wonder would not down. I belonged to the party of the Allies; I believed that German victory, as Germany stood then, meant only the perpetuation of war spirit in the world; and I have not yet changed that belief. But still—I wondered. Most scholarly Christians of whatever denomination know Frances Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven," the great religious poem of our times. The man is trying to escape from God, who is that "hound." But everywhere the footsteps of the Eternal follow him, with their "deliberate speed, majestic instancy." He tries to hide in squirrel holes from God. He absorbs himself in work and the world, drugs himself with dissipation. But always there follow the footsteps, and when he stops to listen there is a voice saying:

> Lo, naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.

So with me; the footsteps and the Voice, first heard among those men who were about to die at Verdun, followed me to the Peace that was not

peace, will follow me always. I heard them in the dugouts behind the Carso when an Italian chaplain told me one moment of certain delightful days of his youth spent in a seminary near Vienna, and the next moment was spitting toward the enemy some of the atrocity charges common on all fronts. The footsteps beat, the Voice sounded, in a headquarters of the British front, when a blood-mad civilian visitor—at home a churchwarden and a pillar of society—attributed to all Germans atrocious practices beyond the worst imaginings of bestial savages. Through the beat of guns, the throb of aircraft motors above cowering towns, the cheering of crowds—still I heard the footsteps and the Voice. At the rear, one never spoke of their deliberate speed, majestic instancy; civilians, doing their bit by hating at comfortable firesides, would not have understood. But at the front, in trench and headquarters and dugout, the sensitive spirits among those men whose deeds had approved their courage, whose consecration to death had freed their souls—they talked in short, erratic strained sentences which revealed their awareness of this Heavenly pursuit.

"Just to die for one's country is not enough," said Edith Cavell before they took her out before the firing squad. Those among the soldiers at the front who had made their peace with their own

God before the whistle blew them over the top—still you saw a trace of spiritual unease in their eyes, as though the footsteps of the Hound of Heaven had not yet ceased, as though the Voice were not yet contented. This faith was the highest thing they knew; their only life buoy in the deluge of hate and wickedness which had overwhelmed the world. But why, with Christianity everywhere triumphant, was this thing permitted to be? Germany started it—yes. The soldier of the Allies believed that in his soul, though now and then he entertained a suspicion that Germany was not wholly to blame. But even that Kaiser, in whom he loved to sum up the rottenness of Germany, was a most punctilious observer of Christian forms, was forever praying down victory on German arms. At this point most of them, probably, gave up thinking and took to the duties of the moment. But a few, in long, serious, midnight talks at wayside inns of the rear zone, spoke the full and final thought of their hearts. It was not God nor Christ at fault. Somewhere, expressed or implied, beyond all this stood an untarnished Christ, be he God or only the genius of goodness expressing God. But the organized servants of our Christian God which we call the Church—they had somehow failed. Beyond the invocations and chantings of the Church sounded

dimly, insistently, some call of the God whose purposes they had not yet grasped.

The Peace came, with its new ignominies. And now it was as though not really the men of the trenches but a whole world were harassed by the footsteps which would not cease from following, the distant, persistent Voice which will not be still.

> Lo, naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.

Is not that the cause for the bigotries, the unreason, the greeds, the renewal of old, gnawing hatreds, which have marked the world since 1918? As children are often most irritable just before they go to sleep, so men are often most unreasonable and wicked just before they enter some quiet haven of good conscience.

In the bosoms of all mankind from the exalted premier ruling in Government House to the most remote farmer reading the weekly news in his county paper, the consciousness of what this world might be, what it ought to be, struggles with old, preconceived notions of patriotism and partisanship, narrow interpretations of self-interest. Just after the Armistice, M. Gemier, in his touching, fantastic religious play *La Grande Pastorale,* flashed before his Parisian audience a vision of

Hell which showed the understanding of genius. Certain of these damned creatures were suffering all the conventional tortures of wheel and fire. But beyond that was a spiritual torture. They ran in aimless circles. They worked for a feverish, hysterical moment at some impossible, useless task; then dropped it and leaped to another, equally impossible and useless. They struggled purposelessly in contorted groups. All motion, all expression was strained, unnatural, rocked by an inner futility. This was the real horror of Gemier's conception—these creatures of the eternal had denied the purposes of eternity; they had become, therefore, machines without a balance wheel. . . . The world, in these five years, has seemed to me a little like Gemier's Hell.

We are trying to hide in squirrel holes from God. And the Church, which purports to interpret to our world His intentions, is hiding too, along with publicans and sinners, princes and potentates.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VOICE

Why do the footsteps follow, and what is the Voice saying to men of good will? That Voice is the expression of an infinite intelligence which can tolerate the thought of eternity, comprehend time and space, as our finite minds cannot. So we may translate it only into the poor mosaic of human words, each for himself. Let me, unchurched layman though I be, attempt my own translation. Let me first, however—so that the reader and I may find some firm and useful basis of understanding—try to determine certain common factors in all the churched and unchurched creeds and varieties of Christianity. And indeed, since both faiths have a common ethical system, what I shall say of Christianity should apply just as well to Judaism.

There is one God; a first cause. Man is "made in His image." You may interpret this literally or figuratively. Broadly conceived, it means that the spirit of man reflects, however dimly, the spirit of God; that he approaches his possible

perfection in so far as he imitates God. The material universe is a creation of majestic and exquisite harmonies; so, rightly understood, is the mystic, spiritual universe. Whether you call the process "conversion," "holy living" or "obedience to the Law," the process which makes the perfect Christian or the perfect Hebrew consists in yielding his impulses and desires to God's purposes and will.

Man, like God, is an immortal, indestructible spirit. This brief, visible life on our tiny planet is but a prologue, spoken in one weak word, to an eternal drama. It is, however, man's time of test, the first important period in his growth, as that of a plant is the period in the germ. Upon what he does here depends, either to an important degree or a supreme degree, his eternal destinies. If he has put himself into harmony with God on this earth his spirit will "rest in peace"; it will be well with him hereafter. If he remain out of harmony with God, it will be in some degree ill. His punishment, in the opinion of the creeds, varies from an eternity of torture to a period of somber readjustment.

What constitutes this oneness with God is a point where the creeds differ most widely, some holding the acceptance of their own peculiar faiths the one thing necessary. But we are looking for

common factors now, not variants. And under the canons of any creed whatever, none is perfectly saved unless his way of life synchronizes with the majestic harmonies of God. He must be a doer of the law, not merely a believer. Otherwise, religion would have nothing whatever to do with morals.

Those shepherds of Judea who looked upon the desert stars and wove their dreams into the faith of our Western peoples saw clearly the shining way across. That universe of God, stretching into infinity beyond them, was a creation of beauty and of law. The silent stars, forever swinging in their luminous curves, were an obedient and ordered part of a plan. Man's duty in that plan was to bring not only his own spirit but his environment into harmony with God's will. That was part of his task on earth, perhaps his whole task. There arose among the children of Israel a man of genius named Moses. Whether by direct revelation or by that process, almost as miraculous, through which genius leaps from star to star, he laid down for his people a code of action so all-embracing and yet so practical that the Ten Commandments with changing interpretations to fit changing times, have remained for nearly thirty centuries the moral guide of the Judean-born religions. Jesus came to express

them all and to widen their scope in his final Commandment—"that ye love one another."

Jesus did more. After all, the Hebrew God was a tribal conception. Salvation through oneness with His infinite goodness, belonged to the Children of Israel alone. Dimly here and there in the Old Testament we glimpse a mind groping through the mists of its own time for a wider interpretation. But the Jew, if he thought much about the future at all, still found himself bound by the tribal habit of the troglodyte. His vision was limited; beyond the Roman Empire to the West and vaguely understood hordes on the steppes and mountains to the East, he knew nothing of men. The civilizations building among the reeds of the Seine, the caves of the Colorado, the peaks of the Andes; the great expanses of humanity which made his tiny clan so insignificant —they lay two thousand years beyond his education. God was going to save the Hebrews, and as part of the salvation give them universal empire. Only as men became Jews by voluntary act or by conquest was Heaven opened to them. But Jesus proclaimed his gospel "to all men." The Kingdom of Heaven was no longer tribal.

Yet the Jew had dreamed his dream, and dreamed it true. When, if ever, man was perfected in God, there would come a millennium, an

age of Heaven on earth. This perfected world and the world eternal of goodness and happiness would lie so close together that death would be but the "portal of the life elysian."

So it is with the perfect believer, even in this present world of grievous imperfections. I spoke once with a chaplain concerning the courage of men in battle. He was a brave man; it was, however, the fashion in the Great War for heroes to admit their own moments of cowardice. "The only absolutely brave men I know," he said, "are a priest and a captain of the line. Both have highly spiritual natures and believe their faiths without reservation. To them death is just stepping over into eternal and glorious life. The transition may be a little disagreeable; but what price is that to pay for an eternity of rapture?"

To create Heaven on earth, so that this life may blend into the glorious next—tacitly or explicitly the great body of modern religious thought has made this a part of Christian creed. Christendom, repeating that phrase of prayer "thy Kingdom come," daily expresses this ideal. The world of the senses may be a vale of tears; nevertheless it is part of religious duty to dry the sources of those tears. Certain of the older sects believe in withdrawing bodies of men and women from the world, that they may by tending their own

inner lights present to God as an offering their own perfected souls. But even such creeds do not make this a universal rule; it is only for those "called" to the religious life.

For the rest—Christianity does not content itself, and never did, simply with perfecting the individual so that his soul may be strong to resist the temptations of greed, lust and hate. Part of its "mission," its workaday business, is to remove those temptations. In San Francisco some twenty years ago, lingered a most unsavory vice district, a rudiment of the old mining camp, called St. Mary's Alley. Opposite its entrance stood old St. Mary's Church, Catholic; and two or three blocks up California Street, Grace Church, Episcopal. What did those churches do about St. Mary's Alley? Did they content themselves with making the souls of their members so pure as to pass it by unseen? On the contrary, they brought hard, unsentimental political pressure to bear; and St. Mary's Alley has become a park. Here is a practical example of the larger Christian spirit; a proof, which could be multiplied a million times, that the spirit of Jesus in action concerns itself not only with the individual soul but with a comely and moral environment—not only with "sin" but with the "occasion of sin." And as the world has become more and more great

and specialized and compressed, these occasions of sin have retreated further and further back into the complexities of the body politic. Stealing, as I define it, is acquiring goods contrary to the current tribal rules for the protection of property. When Moses gave the Ten Commandments, a thief stole by invading his neighbor's chicken yard or snatching a purse on the road. Nowadays, a man may steal as wickedly as the Judean thief and on a scale undreamed in Judea, by sitting in a back room and making a secret agreement with an apparent competitor. As the scope and vision of society have widened, the Church—a little hesitatingly and reluctantly, it would seem to the layman—has been obliged ever to widen its concern with the occasions of sin.

So here we have certain factors common to all Christian beliefs and modern Judaism. First, since the true believer tries to put himself into harmony with an infinitely just God, morality forms an integral part of religion. Second, religion should concern itself not only with perfecting the individual but with making the world he lives in a better soil for moral and spiritual growth; not only with purifying souls, but with creating "The Kingdom." Any human institution which, taken as a whole, defeats these two objects, sets itself up as an enemy to religion.

Let us then look at war, not as a material factor in modern society, but as a spiritual factor. If by its perpetuation mankind as a mass "grows in grace," then in spite of devastated fields, ruined cities, crippled populations, wrecked economic systems, war is good; let us arm for the Right. If, however, it makes as a whole for lower morality, lesser spiritual growth in the terms on which Jesus defined the spirit, then war is the soul enemy of the Judean-born religions. To put it in the terms of the stricter sects, is Heaven less populous, Hell more, because of this most venerable human institution? In the present inquiry, little else matters.

## CHAPTER III

### THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S

The primitive Christian, swimming with his little burden of love in a sea of hate and force, must have been puzzled at times to reconcile his new, passionately held revelation with his political conscience. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," Christ said. Faith, hope, charity; poverty, chastity, obedience; clean and just relations with his immediate neighbor—those were God's things. But exactly what things were Caesar's? For example, the Emperor, making war, compelled his subjects to fight for him. Ancient Judea knew only too well the face of war. In battle, a man kills men. That may be justifiable; but along with its physical horrors war trails a vivid Hell of moral dirt. Judea had experienced the corruption, the greed, the lust, the murderous impulses which fester in military camps; the carnivals of hate, theft, rape and cowardly slaughter which follow the capture of a town. Yet this thing was Caesar's. Except when Caesar asked for renunciation of the Faith, it

was the Christian's duty to follow him. After all, those Hebrew scriptures on which the ministry of Christ based itself had sanctioned war; after all, the kings and prophets of Judea had sometimes commanded God's people to slay and spare not. As men and institutions tend to do in perplexity, the bewildered Church gave it up and accepted things as they were. Ignoring the "occasion of sin" which war affords, she contented herself with putting down the old Adam in her individual sons; so that when they went to battle, they should maintain amidst the temptations of war souls strong through grace.

By the time Constantine saw his vision in the midst of battle and the Roman Empire accepted Christianity, the compromise between Christian love and the realities of war seemed complete. Now, the Faith was in power; but the Empire which it ruled was dying. And again the Church readjusted its views on war.

Heathens and later Moslems threatened it from without, Pagans from within. Then and for many centuries afterward, all Christendom believed in a literal, fiery Hell for sinners and unbelievers, a Heaven of eternal rapture for the Faithful. It were better, Churchmen felt, to endure the bitterness of war, to absorb its hatreds and violence, than to let Christianity

perish and condemn friend and enemy alike to an eternal misery.

Almost as completely did the Church yield in the matter of internal wars between Christian princes. As time went on, it did indeed draw a distinction between just and unjust wars. But what was a just war? Manifestly, in most cases one litigant to a dispute has the balance of right on his side, the other the balance of wrong. If this were not so, courts of law would be a fraud and a mockery. Seldom did the Church, except when its own integrity was involved, take sides against any belligerent no matter how brutal or greedy his intention. Tacitly it surrendered, ruled that this habit in man of going out and killing in gangs was too deeply rooted for Christianity to eradicate. There came at last a wise Jew to face what he thought to be truth, to give a philosophical basis for this surrender to Caesar. The State, said Spinoza, expanding the thought of Maimonides, has no morals. What is wrong for the individual, such as killing, lying, breaking solemn pledges, is perfectly right for the State. Its only canon of ethics is its own welfare and convenience. Practically, this thought had been accepted by Christianity long before a Christianized Jew made it into a formula. It is one of those comfortable explanations of things as they are by

which the reactionary tries to resist the irresistible flow of the human spirit.

Long before this, the Church and the other moral forces of Western Europe had built a pretty but rather flimsy bridge between God and Caesar, and called it chivalry. Without trying to reach the roots of war, to deal with the "occasion of sin," Christianity worked on the individual. It built up the ideal of the perfect Christian warrior who was to smite not in anger but in justice. He bore his arms to break the heathen and uphold the Christ. He spared his conquered foe. He resisted those carnal impulses of the flesh which battle engenders in man. Everywhere, he tempered with mercy the justice of his cause.

This ideal was conceived by the aristocracy, of the aristocracy, for the aristocracy. While we cannot know for certain, it is probable that the hordes of ignorant minds who with pike and bill followed their armored masters into battle never had instruction in the Christian ethics of war.

However, it rose as high as its times permitted. Those were the ages of snobbery. One who reads his Shakespeare critically will find that even the master mind of the English race never conceived of any other order of society. And this attitude of the rank and file mattered little, since the

aristocracy was in command, gave the order of battle.

Let us render to chivalry its due meed. Before that ideal came into the world, battle and massacre had been almost synonymous. The victors pursued the retreating army and "slew and spared not" save perhaps to carry away captives as slaves. If it suited their convenience or whim, they ravished whole provinces, leaving the inhabitants to starve in the ruins. Chivalry established the rule—often broken, as often observed—that the warrior should kill and destroy no more than was necessary to insure victory. Perhaps this code broke down most often in wars where the churches were directly involved. The Crusaders sacked Jerusalem and massacred its inhabitants; while Saladin the Moslem, when he retook the town, put Christendom to blush by his moderation. The Thirty Years' War, stirred up by religious hatreds, made Germany a desert. This, however, is scarcely a paradox. In these wars the Church, itself a belligerent, was swept into the cauldron of hatreds. The instances merely prove what European men were capable of doing once they lost their chief instrument of moral balance.

And in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, after Cervantes "laughed chivalry to death," it achieved its greatest triumph. Christian in spirit,

it engendered the code of civilized warfare whereby every soldier tacitly pledged himself to make warfare as merciful as possible. Aristocratic in organization, it created a small, exclusive military caste, reënforced by a few bayonets from the dregs of the population. To this caste was designated the task of fighting wars. In the period between about 1650 and about 1790 warfare bore with unprecedented lightness upon human life. Probably the French casualties in battle during all the famous wars of Louis XIV totaled less than those of the single Twentieth Corps of Paris in the World War. And those hundred and fifty years were precisely the period when England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy were laying the foundations for that amazing structure of human creation which Christendom built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Indeed, one may argue speculatively that the late material progress of the white race, its sudden leadership in the modern world, is due to that same check on the raw impulses of the warrior. Let us take by contrast Islam. Perhaps the lowest of the great religions in its ideals, it has still best kept the original faith. In its attitude toward women and marriage it is less exalted than Christianity; but that is balanced, some would say, by its views on alcohol. When Islam keeps

the faith, its worst enemy would scarcely deny that it is a fairly good instrument for an orderly society. Islam ran its course from birth to decadence in five or six centuries. At its height it was a civilization of learning, culture, comparative enlightenment. Damascus of the Eighth Century made the best city of Europe appear a huddle of barbarians. But whereas Christianity deplored war, at worst merely compromised with it, Islam exalted war. To fight for the Faith—in the end the Faith meant only your special sect—stood as a supreme duty to every Moslem. Death in battle was the sure opening to an eternity of spiritual and sensual delight. To kill the unbeliever was a holy duty. I have mentioned the gallantry of Saladin at the capture of Jerusalem. However, he was presumably a bright exception. Most battles of the "Moslem hordes" ended in indiscriminate massacres, whether the enemy were Heathen, Christian, or only another Moslem sect. The flowers of Islam such as scholarship, poetry, dawning research, suddenly and mysteriously withered. Why? Probably because her best young men were generation after generation going forth to die in battle and open the gates of Paradise, leaving the weaker and less able to transmit their poorer blood. This, I believe, mainly accounts for the eclipse of Islam, its degeneracy

from the brightness of medieval Damascus or Cordoba to the setness and squalor of modern Constantinople.

In that period of gathering racial strength between the end of the Thirty Years' War and the Napoleonic wars, which from the standpoint of the race amounted almost to a truce, men of the Christian races drew a new line of definition between the things which belong to the Church, as the expression of God in action, and the things which belong to the practical side of man. Exact inquiry concerning the nature of our environment seemed no longer impious; perhaps, even Churchmen began to reason. God knew what he was doing when He endowed us with this curious, active, soaring human intellect. We set ourselves to discover the world as it really is, not as hazy, biased interpretations of Revelation might lead us to think that it is. We discovered the main laws which govern the Universe. We bored further and further into the nature of things animate and inanimate. We harnessed the flame and the lightning and made them helpers in our work, until any pair of human hands multiplied its productivity a thousand fold. We learned how to send our thoughts round the world in the twinkling of an eye.

In the world of the spirit, the age of Romance

—at least the old romance—definitely passed; there followed an age of realism and realists. This formed a poor soil for chivalry, which was half compounded of poetic illusion. Cervantes had stabbed it to the heart; but the institution was two centuries in dying. Even then its pale ghost lingered in the code of civilized warfare, drawn never so strictly or with such careful regard for the Christian amenities as in the age which was to prove it a dead letter.

But we did not perceive, as yet, the passing of chivalry. We only knew, as the productive nineteenth century gave way to the tragic twentieth, that the nations of Christendom had become one great armed camp, that the diplomacies of Christendom concerned themselves not as formerly with false or true points of honor, but solely with extending territory and commercial privileges. If we except Russia, democracy, which is the spirit of Christianity in politics, had become all but universal; and with one paradoxical, unexpected result. No longer did the aristocrat enjoy spiritual and material privileges on the tacit understanding that his was the sole responsibility for national defense. That responsibility belonged now to all citizens. Into the crowded nations of Europe had come Conscription. Every healthy male citizen was trained in arms, was ready, when

the time should come, to participate in "the national defense"—which must be, on one side or the other, synonymous with "the national attack." Modern scientific improvement was transforming, although slowly, the equipment of war. We realized that; though in our worst nightmares we did not realize what this would mean before many years.

Yet we solaced ourselves with the bright side of the picture. Men, individually, were growing better. Perhaps they took their Christianity less literally than in past ages; but they adhered, in their ways of life, more closely to its spirit. In every age men of good will had heard the Voice; from the faithful St. Francis singing of his brotherhood with all men, to the agnostic Rousseau declaring that war is folly but cannot be remedied because men are incurable fools. Agnostic or Christian, however, these were at one with Rousseau in their despair of a remedy. Now, however, the new intellectual daring of the age inspired these pacifists. They searched down to the causes of war, found it a disease of man's nature which might be cured. From his voluntary servitude to the soil, Tolstoi spoke his burning convictions. Pacifism evolved from the passive stage to the active. Whole nations seemed to be laying hold on these principles. By 1910 France was

teaching in her public schools the dreadful unnecessity of quarrels between nations. Spite of what we saw about us, we wondered if war really belonged in the structure of modern life. A calculation of finances against costs seemed to prove that no nation could sustain a campaign lasting more than six months.

Germany crossed the French border. The war thus begun lasted four years and a quarter. It involved, save for a few small kingdoms, all Europe, a third of Africa, the more populous and advanced half of the two Americas, passively at least two-thirds of Asia, all of Australasia. It cost forty million lives. It destroyed the best male breeding stock of all the great European nations. It condemned two generations to the degradations which go with modern poverty.

These are mainly material effects. Its most palpable effect on the spiritual side was to lay forever the pale, ineffectual ghost of chivalry. That code of civilized warfare which the Church had been fifteen centuries building disappeared like tissue paper in a furnace. Within a week, Germans were dropping bombs on the civilians of defenseless towns, and shooting civilian hostages. Within a month, England was preparing to starve out the women and children of Germany. When the war ended, scarcely an article of the Code but

had been habitually, systematically violated for four years. That pretty, dainty structure by which the Church had bridged the gap between Christianity and war was forever fallen.

Men of good will looked at his wreckage and for the first time beheld chivalry and the things grown from the spirit of chivalry exactly as they are. It was even less than a compromise; virtually, the servants of Christ had yielded to Mars all that Mars needed. "Do not harm women and children; protect them and succor them, whether they be friend or foe," chivalry had said; and Mars had gracefully acquiesced. Why was Mars, with this elaborate and somewhat theatrical gesture of mercy, accepting such a limitation on his privileges? Just because women and children were weak, and could not harm him. On them, therefore, the Christian warrior might indulge his pretty mercies. As things stood then, it would not make a particle of difference.

But this was now a world of machinery, which is the heritage of past strengths put at service of the weak. And machinery was coming with dazzling speed into the processes of war. A child with a broadax in his hand is "amazing weak." A child with the lanyard of a loaded cannon in his hand is marvelously strong. Only a little less effective is the child or the young woman pulling

light levers or loading cartridges in a munition factory. And finally, Mars saw that war no longer concerned armies alone; he saw that every human being capable of doing any work whatever serves the uses of a nation in war. The very babies might grow up to be fighters or workers. Wherefore, the bombs began to rain their tearing explosives or their choking gases upon munition factories and open cities; and none who sent forth the bombers asked how many women and children would that night perish. And they did perish by thousands, as in any future war they will perish by millions.

In another and less obvious way, the Christian spirit, as exemplified by chivalry, had greatly hampered the ultimate intentions of Mars. In material human affairs, destruction is always easier than construction. It takes ages to build a city; a conflagration may destroy it in a night. Such being the case, men have wondered at times why for three or four centuries progress in devices for killing men has dragged so far behind progress in devices for production and distribution of wealth. The best tool they had for this purpose, up to the World War, was violent explosion of a chemical compound; a thing known and used in its present form at least four centuries ago. "The conservative nature of soldiers"

was held to account for that; which is not the real explanation, I think. The Christian soldier was trying to live, as best he might, by the spirit of chivalry. He knew the butcheries of war as well as its glories. He preferred, by a kind of tacit agreement among warriors of all nations, to limit its harms and horrors. A half-legendary story to which recent research has given some foundation, relates that during the Crimean War an eminent British soldier invented some cheap and expeditious new method of killing on an enormous scale. His confrères of the War Office inspected his invention and then filed it away among their secret archives. "Its deadliness staggers humanity," they said. "We cannot be responsible for introducing such an instrument." This story may be false; but its spirit rings true. It exemplifies perfectly the attitude of your old-time soldier. A fine, upstanding, veteran British Colonel of the professional army, speaking to me at the Front, had his say about civilians and their influence on war. "They've spoiled this game," he said. "We understood it, and we'd made it relatively harmless. But they've come along with their inventions and devices—forced on us, sir—and made the business a universal Hell."

We used to shudder before 1914 at stories of ancient warriors who impounded their enemies

and burned them to death. By the middle of the war, we were scorching our enemies, regularly and scientifically, with liquid flame.

Poison had always been considered a sneaking, loathly way of killing, sternly barred by the professional soldier. But poison gas became toward the end of the World War an instrument of slaughter only a little less useful than high explosive. Toward the end, we had invented our Lewisite gas, the mist of which, settling even in minute quantities on the skin, will produce certain and painful death within twelve hours. By this instrument, it will be possible in a night to kill the inhabitants of whole cities. As the war closed, both the Central Powers and the Allies were studying closely the possibilities in warfare by bacilli. That study, together with advanced research in wholesale killing by electricity and invisible rays, has gone on steadily since the Armistice. Mars no longer admits any check on his gory purposes. From his throne of skulls, he laughs at Christ.

Yes, the work of organized Christianity to mitigate war, after ages of partial success, has proved a complete, final failure. What is the Church to do? Revive the old method? Try again to limit by the dead formulas of chivalry or by flimsy

agreement the horrors and deadliness of modern war? Certain diplomats, stronger for once in the heart than in the head, are trying that even now; but they who understand modern war only laugh at the pitiful ineffectiveness of such proceedings. War is a game without a referee. When your opponent hits below the belt your only recourse, if you would win or even exist, is to hit an inch lower. Poison gas has been imagined before the Great War; it was specifically barred by every code we had. On April 22, 1915, the Germans loosed their first poison gas attack. Did the Allies content themselves with protesting? On the contrary, their chemists were at work next day devising deadlier gases. The government which, whatever its intention, entered a war without every known device for killing "in case of emergency" would discredit itself with its citizens. The moment comes when the enemy, perhaps in despair of victory, hits below the belt, uses some device outlawed by the existing code. The government which nobly refused to rise to the emergency and reply in kind would probably be torn to pieces by its own supporters.

No, we cannot recreate chivalry. It began dying in 1605 when Cervantes the soldier published his wise romance of *Don Quixote;* it gave its last gasp at Ypres, when the Germans opened their gas

attack. Its very corpse is rotted now; all the powers of magic cannot make it live again. It was a strange hybrid, half Christian mercy and half moonshine. And this is the age of realities, when men of all nations, races and intellectual castes have less and less patience with pretty illusions. But whoever, inside the Church or out, holds himself a member of Christ's Kingdom, knows that we must create something more effective to take its place. Else Christendom is threatened as never before; and not, this time, by Pagan torture chambers or Saracen swords, but by the foe from within.

Here is a task for the Church—a task and a test. That Garden of the Lord, that visible manifestation of God on earth, that shining picture of the Kingdom which holds the eyes of every Christian with any vision larger than the salvation of his own particular soul, stands in grave danger. The Church cannot meet the emergency simply by special work with the individual, trying to make all men and women perfect. That method is important—I grant you, theologians, it is most important of all. But the experience of nineteen centuries proves that it is not enough. Whatever separate paths the individual sects of Christianity may choose toward Heaven, on this one point it must sink its differences. It is strong

now; it is not depleted by sectarian wars nor is it forced, as in the days of its puny infancy, to compromise or perish. United on a purpose, it can do what it wills with the spirit of man. It must reach past the mere individual toward the machinery of modern life. With the courage born of the right and the truth, it must study material and human things as they are, not as some preconceived notion of philosophy holds that they may be. It must determine the causes of war, and having found them set about to eliminate them from the human heart and from human society.

Else, the Church will not only have compromised this time; she will have surrendered. Condemned in her own conscience, she will be sinking into mere soft emotional satisfaction and hollow outward observance. Her meetings and revivals, her dawn communions and High Masses, her pulpits and vestments, her consoling ministrations and relieving charities, will not avail to save the Lord's Garden in the day of wrath which she has done nothing to avert.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HYMN OF HATE

The first and most obvious evil of modern war from the viewpoint of the moralist, I have set forth in the last three chapters. It hampers, it fetters, it destroys that concerted effort to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, which is the chief higher aim of organized Christianity—"Thy Kingdom come." Few, I think, will dispute this. However, this special evil might be tolerated if the harm were balanced by some special moral good. If battle were a means of grace; if the unlucky warriors died and the lucky survived with souls more subtly attuned to the infinite; if finally they left, because of their heroism, a higher spiritual atmosphere, then Christian morals might continue to tolerate war. The sincere militarist, whenever he happens also to be a Christian, believes that war does confer all these benefits, and is therefore a spiritual gain to our race.

His candid opponent must admit that this position was once fairly sound. And here exactly lies the most perplexing point in the morals of war.

The average man, called out to fight for his country, seems to himself to be imitating that supreme act of sacrifice by which Christ crowned and completed his ministry. Once, it was more than seeming. When he went voluntarily though reluctantly, when he was not pressed into service by the power of some overlord or drawn into the ranks by some primitive desire of loot or slaughter, he made a supreme, unselfish sacrifice beyond which man cannot go. Else all our cenotaphs to the soldier dead, our memorial poems, our heroic ballads, were mockeries.

Often I try to throw myself into the mental state of a boy-warrior in the age before man began to know his world; and somehow it is the little, remote, provincial English town of Stratford-on-Avon, in the days when Shakespeare was young, which frames the picture for me. The boy of sixteenth-century Stratford, even when the Grammar School had taught him how to read, had a narrow intellectual horizon. The confines of County Warwick bounded his vision. Even London was but a vague place of imagined glories where dwelt that Queen who divided with God his loyalties. The peoples lying beyond—they were only a vague, twisted concept. Of Frenchman or Spaniard or Dutchman, he had heard little, and that little only the worst. His merrie England,

his beloved England and most of all that little England which rolled in green lawns over the Warwickshire hills—that was the only world he knew. Now, the Queen had spoken. England was at war. This serene, green land was threatened. He, or the corresponding lad of Tours or Burgos or Maestricht, had no means of knowing that this war might have been declared in the beginning because his own country wanted another country's lands or because two princes had quarreled over a mistress. All he knew was that his sovereign called; and if he did not respond valiantly, the green, pleasant vales of Warwickshire or Touraine or Holland might be green and pleasant no more. With a regretful look at the life he might be leaving, he shouldered his pike and went out to give his all. He had no doubt but that this heroic act was also absolutely right. It was a fine thing—the finest he knew.

Only, as education became universal, as the newspaper with its mechanical servant the electric telegraph made it possible for all instantly to know what was happening in any quarter of the globe, as the growth of democracy forced the boy of Warwickshire to interest himself in public affairs instead of leaving them to the Squire and the Lord, as the world shrank until Petrograd and Constantinople of the Twentieth Century

were nearer to Stratford than London of the Sixteenth, some of the fineness began to rub away. It became possible for the Warwickshire lad to understand that the average Frenchman or German or Italian was also an average human being much like himself. Also, the inquiring spirit of the age had enabled men of larger view to delve further and further down toward the causes and reasons of war. They found the main root of the trouble, more often than not, to be economic in its nature. Even when a King fought to insure the succession of his own house to a throne, he was usually fighting not wholly for glory and power but also to fatten the purses and increase the properties of his chief retainers. That also began to be popular knowledge. Whereat the militarist, who is essentially a blind worshiper of things as they used to be, found a new philosophical dogma to fit his purposes.

Nations are entities, like human beings. Nations have always struggled against nations, as individuals against individuals; and the basis of the conflict is economic. There must arise now and then an "irreconcilable economic conflict" where one party or the other must yield or die. Then we have war. It cannot be avoided. It will come every so often, and it is meet and right that it should. Through war, the fittest

survive, the weakest go to the wall. It is natural, even consecrated.

The shallow biological analogy involved in the militaristic phrase "survival of the fittest" was long ago discredited by Science. But that is aside from the mark. The point here is that men, unassisted by propaganda, no longer had a firm, undivided view of the sanctity involved in dying for one's country. Reason began to play its light into the dark corners of their minds; or, to phrase it as do the militarists, "their patriotism was weakened, they grew soft through too much peace." From first to last of the Great War, a thousand soldiers of all nations, if one, asked me what it was all about, anyhow? And this, mind, was not a straight inquiry of one who wants to know, but a rhetorical question, plainly put by way of eliciting the answer "nothing!" That old, unquestioning valor to which death in battle for one's country seemed a sacrament, an act of supreme consecration, was passing away.

Wherefore the lords of Europe's destiny in the Nineteenth Century devised another and less noble stimulus for the flagging morale of peoples. In place of narrow consecration, they managed to substitute hate, pure hate. The printing press was the agency by which mankind was growing a little international, a little disposed to question

the validity of exclusive patriotism. They took this agency, perverted it from its natural purposes, made it serve their ends. The process was not difficult. The universal fascination of gossip proves that the malevolent is so much more interesting than the benevolent! In the spiritual realm as in the material, it is easier to destroy than to create; it is easier to rewake the slumbering barbarian in civilized man than to lead him to higher levels of thought and action. However the better and more natural influence of the printed word on international politics—to make men understand that they may forgive—was never entirely overcome; and in all literature and journalism of the Nineteenth Century one traces this dual tendency, these conflicting currents.

What chancelleries and general staffs accomplished in the way of inducing artificial hate appeals to the detached observer as divinely ridiculous; to laugh at it in the proper spirit one would need the humor and the pity of a god. Take England for example—sober, balanced old England, with her cold, hard vision on practical things, her shyly hidden streak of sentiment, her easy, tolerant ways. In the eighties of the last century, the British Army fought a small Colonial war with a nation of sturdy Dutch settlers in South Africa. The settlers were marvelous

fighters in their own country; the British found the job too difficult for the expected rewards, and gave it up. The First Boer War stirred up in Britain little interest and almost no hate. But some of the Lords of England remembered; if we are to believe the gossip of Wilfred Scawin Blunt, the old Queen named another Boer War as one of the things she wanted to see accomplished before she died. Also, Cape Colony was spreading Northward and the Boers had begun to discover unsuspected natural resources in their soil. Wherefore, Cecil Rhodes and other Empire-Builders desired those lands. On their side the Boer settlers developed a hard-headed Dutch prejudice against foreigners of all kinds, and chose to hold back development of the country. There was the unescapable economic conflict; wherefore, the Queen had her wish. Now the native Englishman who had heard of the Boers at all thought about them as rather rough specimens who shot and rode remarkably well and had rather quaint ways. He knew also that they practiced the Protestant religion and came of northern European stock, like himself. Yet within a month after the war began, England was hating the Boers with violent unreason. "The nearest analogy that white civilization presents to the ignorant and obstinate tribes of colored barbarians."—"A

horde of the most miserable scoundrels nature has produced"—— "A savage, and as a savage he should be treated." I cull these gems, as characteristic, from the periodical literature of the time. And the British believed this, both in their minds and in their emotions. The war ended with the absorption of the settlers into British South Africa, and who now in England hates a Boer?

At about the beginning of this century, Russia showed a perilously intent interest in Great Britian's Indian Empire and "spheres of influence" throughout the Near East. Suddenly, the pens of England began to write down Russia and the Russians. Rudyard Kipling, marvelous artist who thinks only from the eyes out, wrote his "Bear that looks like a man." The man in the street began gently to gnash his teeth. The war cloud was dissipated; the gnashing stopped before it grew really violent. A few years later, Russia entered the Triple Entente and fought in the Great War beside Britain. Whereat, the British press capered with delight at the thought of the simple, good-hearted Russian peasant with his fierce loyalties to his Czar; and the populace of London cheered Russians on the streets. Russia abandoned the war, went Bolshevik. In the days after the Armistice, there seemed some danger of the British workman following his

example. Within a few months, the middle-class Englishman was again hating Russians with violence and sincerity.

As for the shifting British emotions toward Germany—but here let me bring the example closer to home. Before 1914, we Americans of the old Colonial blood well knew the German among us. On the whole, perhaps we esteemed him best of the more recent immigrants. We had found him honest, orderly, a good neighbor. Here and there the Prohibition element quarreled with his hereditary love for beer; here and there it was noted, rather in amusement than in criticism, that he kept some of his old national customs—like sängerfests and turnvereins—rather longer than most classes of immigrants. Americans who had gone abroad to study usually noted with disapproval the growth of militarism and force-thought in Germany, but they balanced that with sturdy virtues which they found among their comrades of German classes or seminars.

I believe this a very fair statement of American feeling toward Germany and Germans before 1914. And that balanced judgment, that refusal to condemn, generally persisted until the German militaristic system threatened to conquer Europe and set it back to the Middle Ages, until a mad and overconfident group of reactionaries

ordered American shipping to leave the Seven Seas.

We declared war. Six months later, no slander against Germans as a class was too nasty for us to swallow. "I have been asked how we should treat an individual German who was a friend before the war," wrote an American author not unknow to fame. "I can answer without hesitation. Cut him out from your acquaintance. Withdraw your business from him. And do not fail to let him know how you feel." We even denied them eminence in the arts; heard with satisfaction that Goethe was overrated, Schiller a tin-pan poet, Wagner a degenerate. I am not sure but this was the meanest-spirited among all our mad performances. We applauded to the echo speakers who described how the German army cut off the hands of Belgian children. Most Americans affected at least to believe that no German—no, not one—was anything but a treacherous, lecherous brute. Perhaps I need no further expand this description of American war thought. Nearly every reader can multiply examples from his own heart. I can, certainly. . . .

Then five years of a peace which is not peace; and none of us, save for a few fanatics, unbalanced persons, or professional patriots, believes the extreme slanders against Germany.

Our army stayed four years on the Rhine, and got on well with the inhabitants. We began, as a people, to grow a little sorry for the individual German. Yet that individual German to whom we granted pleasant tolerance in 1913, whom we hated with bitter loathing in 1918, whom we pitied and rather wanted to help in 1923—he is exactly the same man.

Nor is the sketch of hate thought in Germany any less divinely ridiculous. I was in Belgium during the invasion of August, 1914. The German army, as it marched, gnashed its teeth at Russia. They were out—so the simple German soldier told me—on a holy crusade against the barbarous, dangerous Slav. "Tell me, you Americans, why are the English fighting us?" they would ask in sorrow and perplexity rather than in anger. As for the French—one rather disliked to go against the French—poor dupes of Russia! They were good fellows, and valiant fighters. One hoped that when the victorious armies of the Kaiser took Paris, the inhabitants would be friendly.

In that one month, I saw a change come over the whole spirit of the Germany army. The divisions of the Kaiser had tried out the Russian on the Eastern front, and found them wanting. But the British navy had lived up to expectations. It

had made good the blockade, which, the far-sighted heads of German military affairs saw, was yet to be the most effective weapon of the enemy. The little British army, holding its valiant identity from Mons back to Paris, had given promise of what Britain might do on land. The word went out to the press, to the hate orators, to the officers in charge of morale at the front: "Regard England as the supreme enemy!" A week more, and it became dangerous to talk English within hearing of the German army. Six months more, and the line of the Hymn of Hate,

> We have one hate and one alone—England——

seemed to become the essence of German political emotion. A little lacking in the delicacies of humor, the Germans harped on this theme with variations which made good ammunition for *Punch*. I found in Switzerland one German who always repeated "Gott strafe England!" while he was brushing his teeth, the act serving as a memorandum for his daily ritual. Press and public, professional hate-orators and paid propagandist, all turned their batteries on the British. France still figured as a deluded appanage to England, whom one fought as a tricked fool rather than as a dangerous enemy.

The war ended; the Peace of Versailles was drawn. Before a year had passed, circumstances made France "the enemy"; she it was, the Germans believed who had insisted on an inordinate bill of reparations, she it was who held over Germany the military power which would enforce collection. Suddenly, the venom of Germany was switched—officially—from the British wire to the French wire. By 1922, even Admiral von Tirpitz, once leader in the chorus against perjured Britain, announced that Germany must now love England and turn her just, righteous hatred against the real enemy, France. Long before that, circumstances and propaganda had done their work with the populace. In the spring of 1920, less than a year and a half after the Armistice, I tried to reach Stuttgart to interview the German government which had fled from the Kapp *putsch* in Berlin. Few trains were running; I made the last stage of the journey standing up in a fifth class car wedged tight into a sardine can of humanity. The conductor discovered that I had made a mistake in buying my ticket. Now my German is less than rudimentary, but I found that he spoke French. In that language, we straightened out this somewhat complicated matter. We were interrupted by the sinister, tigerish mob roar which a crowd makes when it is work-

ing up toward trouble. At the sound of spoken French, these Germans had begun to mill like cattle; I was bombarded with insults whose meaning I read from the tone rather than the words. A curious stubbornness, mixed perhaps with a loyalty to France, prevented me from declaring myself; I merely glared back. But the conductor spoke for me.

"This man is not French," said he. "His language is English." Instantly the faces about me began to relax their tension. "He is an American!" *"Ach—Amerikanisher!"* sounded from all corners of the car. And voices began to ask in broken English for news of brothers-in-law in Chicago or cousins in Cincinnati. Yet, had I spoken English in that same crowd two years before, I should have been marked for slaughter!

On the same journey, I met in a railway compartment a cultivated German woman, a functionary of the new Republican government. Her mouth was filled with the atrocity of France. Stunted children with waxy circles under their eyes stood about the railroad platforms; many of them were crying. That crying of children ran through all street noises in Germany during the distressful year of 1920—the poor little eyases were hungry. She waved her hand at one such crowd. "That is what France has done!" she

jerked out, "starved our children! Can we forget?"

"But, madam," I interposed—more to get her answer than by way of argument—"it was not the French who caused the hunger of Germany. It was the British blockade."

"Yes," she replied, "but the British were only the cat's paw of France. They will understand some day how they were deceived! France is our natural enemy."

"Would you have said that two years ago?" I inquired.

She paused a moment as though to find some reason to justify her emotion.

"True, but we have found France out since then!" she replied finally.

Now I mention these personal adventures only by way of illustrating the greater from the less. In those days such was the German mood, which the events of the succeeding two years were to intensify. Yet the Englishman of 1910 whom the average German saw merely as a rather too active rival, the Englishman of 1916 whom he classed with pirates, bandits and devils, the Englishman of 1922 whom he had begun to regard as a somewhat benevolent protector, was exactly the same man. So was the Frenchman of 1913 whom he looked lightly down upon as a frivolous but at-

tractive person, the Frenchman of 1916 whom he pitied as a valiant dupe, and the Frenchman of 1922 whom he pictured, through the lurid mists of his own sulphurous hate, as a grasping, murderous Shylock. Reason laughs at these facile changes in psychology; but reason does not enter into the equation. These mental heats are partly natural to the old Adam in man, and partly artificial; partly engendered by the blind desire of revenge that follows after nation or army has "seen its dead," and partly stirred up by war propaganda. The intelligent propagandist understands that his true objecture is to drive the issue from the field of reason into that of the emotions. This accomplished, there remains nothing to be done. Against all dictates of their higher intelligence, all hints from their sense of humor, the people whose minds he has corrupted will hate and hate and keep on hating until he turns off the current or switches it to another wire.

As in one mood I review my memories of the World War, it seems to me like a great epidemic of mental disease, whose chief symptom was the gnashing of teeth. Irvin Cobb, with his quick, discriminating eye, noted in the first month that, though many Europeans laughed, no one ever seemed to smile. In repose, all countenances were strained; even young faces showed lines. That

strain deepened rather than lifted in the ensuing four years, until the prevailing expression somewhat resembled that of insanity. And indeed is not hatred akin to madness? Going to the Front became in time a relief. For there men were too busy with the physical manifestations of hate to spare time and energy for its emotional manifestations.

How repellant and yet how supremely ridiculous seem now the expressions of hatred which were to us then the daily food of the mind! The Germans were rough, to put the matter with all Christian mildness, in their passage through Belgium. There were German atrocities; however, I prefer to call them now, nine years from the event, *militaristic* atrocities. The German General Staff had issued orders designed to cow the Belgians, to render them spiritually incapable of resistance. The German army, under iron discipline, obeyed those orders. Here and there, of course, were sporadic episodes of violence or outrage. You cannot mobilize a million and a half men without including some natural thugs and born degenerates whose tendencies will come out in the red mists of war. Here and there, as at Gerbévillers in France, a militarist, drunken with his poison theory and French wine, exceeded his orders and made of occupation a massacre. It

remains to be shown, however, whether any army or any nation similarly well grounded in the philosophy of militarism, similarly well disciplined, would have behaved any better in the circumstances.

In the third week of the war, a hysterical American woman staggered into the headquarters of the American tourists at the Savoy Hotel, London. She had escaped from Belgium. And at a Belgian railway station she had seen twenty boy scouts with their hands cut off. The Germans had done it, in order that these children might never bear arms against Germany. I laugh now when I remember that I swallowed this yarn whole. So did many another responsible American. And quite possibly this was the origin of our favorite hate story on the Allied side of the border. I, being a journalist and accustomed to draw the line between fact and rumor, began to doubt this charge, which the populace was soon whispering in a hundred forms, which the more violent newspapers were printing daily—but without details and without photographs. During the four remaining years of the war, I conducted a steady search for Belgian children with their hands cut off. Of course I never found a case, though sometimes the trail seemed to grow hot. For example, an Englishman to whom I imparted

my indiscreet doubts roared at me that two Belgian refugee children whose hands had been cut off by the Germans lived next door to his sister in St. John's Wood, London. I got the address, to which I repaired at once by taxicab—and found two Belgian children with four sturdy and intact little hands. Reëntering Belgium in 1919 I mentioned this rumor to a people who certainly did not love Germans; and they only laughed. Yet the populace of the unoccupied countries believed it with passionate intensity. When one denied or doubted it, their rage of unreasonable contradiction betrayed their mood. They liked to believe. This instance of German barbarity confirmed their hate—their dear, black hate.

In an article about the German invasion of Belgium, I remarked on a feature of war which I had never imagined—the smell, akin to that of a menagerie, hanging in the trail of an army. Not long afterward, I received a letter from a French professor, a man of first rank in his scientific specialty, asking further information on that point. He was writing a monograph on the German race, to prove by incontrovertible facts that Germans "were not exactly human." They came from a different evolutionary stock from the rest of our species. He had noted, and so had other Frenchmen, that Germans exhaled a smell dif-

ferent from that of *homo sapiens,* the true man. My exact observation on that point, he said, would furnish him valuable data.

Midcourse of the war, an American friend gave me a copy of a most pathetic letter written by a German woman to her brother in America and somehow smuggled across the border. This thing must not happen again, she said. The German people must rise and overthrow the system which caused it. For herself, she had sent nine sons to the war. Six were dead. If the war could only spare Fritz, the youngest, her baby! Should Fritz die too, she could not survive. Of course, the first part of the letter forecast exactly what happened afterward in Germany. To cheer their drooping spirits, I read this letter to a group of French, English and American friends in Paris. I looked up from my reading. The eyes of the American woman who sat nearest me were sharp and hard. "I hope Fritz is dead by now!" she jerked out.

Concerning the follies of hatred on the other side of the line, I hesitate to write lest I myself be accused of a lingering hate complex. I instance but two episodes, one from my own experience, the other on unimpeachable testimony. Deported from Belgium at the end of August, 1914, I passed the first night at Maestricht in neutral Holland.

I found a group of Germans in the hotel. With wild eyes and hushed voices they told me about the dreadful things done to the German colony in Brussels by the native Belgians. As soon as war was declared, the throat of every German man was cut. But the women, they said, were saved for a more dreadful fate. After having their wicked way with them, the Belgians cut off their breasts! When the rescuing German army arrived in Brussels, the German residents were all dead.

Now it happened that I had come fresh from Brussels, where I had been listening to the troubles of Brand Whitlock, our Minister to Belgium. Until the Germans came, he was German *chargé d'affairès*. Belgium, being a neutral nation which had thought little about war, did not at first show the proper hatred against Germany; when the Kaiser's army overran her border she was merely stunned and heart-broken. But the hate clouds began to gather. Two or three days later, mobs were smashing the windows of German shops. Whitlock conferred with the authorities. The police went forth, gathered up all the Germans, encamped them under guard in the railroad yards. The army issued them rations and the Red Cross brought milk for the babies. One or two German men, before the police arrived,

were somewhat beaten up. These were the sole casualties. I had found both Mr. Whitlock and Burgomaster Max justly proud of the moderation shown by Brussels. But they got no credit in Germany! To the end of the war, that story about the women's breasts remained with the Germans as popular as, with us, did the one about children's hands.

During that venture into Belgium, I saw the first British prisoners taken by the German army. Three years later, I met many of the same men in Switzerland, where they had been exchanged as invalids. If any one above ground is to be trusted in a friendly statement of fact, it is an officer of the old, professional British army. They spoke, with a moderation quite lacking in the tone of the Allied press, concerning their treatment in German prison camps. After the Germans got things in hand, they said, prison life went about as well as any one could expect. But their most vivid memory of the three years between battle and freedom was that horrible trip into Germany, when the populace crowded to the windows of their train to spit on them. "I was wounded," said one of them, "and nearly mad of fever thirst. After two days, my pride gave way, and I began to beg a drink from the women in Red Cross uniforms at the station platforms.

They would deliberately give water and hot coffee to the German wounded, and then pour out the leavings on the station platform, and laugh in my face. I'd been in Germany only three months before the war began. Then, every one was not only courteous, but friendly."

Perhaps I need no longer multiply instances. Hate is a necessity of modern war, it seems. Without "righteous hatred" armies will not fight, nor civilians endure, to the last ditch. In more primitive times, when unreasoned superstition played so large a part in human affairs, artificial stimulus of hatred was not especially necessary. The ignorant populace automatically hated the enemy because he had a different complexion and a different smell, worshiped different gods, wore trousers instead of a tunic, cut his beard round instead of square, spoke a different language. The aristocracy—well, fighting was their business; they liked it. But with literate populations of self-governing citizens, the case is different. Men have begun to know the worlds beyond their borders. Is your enemy Germany? The average man has been brought up on Grimm's Fairy Tales, has read in translation Goethe and Schiller, is informed on German work with housing and sanitation, or knows the accomplishments of German science.

He cannot at once regard every individual German as a barbarian dripping with the gore of women and children. It is necessary to raise up in him blind, red emotion so that his higher brain cells will cease to function. The proceeding is not essentially unlike the war dances by which certain savages, before rushing to battle, lash themselves into a state of blind fury. By the time the work is done and the populace is ready "to stand firm," thought has been burned up in the fires of emotion. The nation is in the mental condition of a mob; and Le Bon has laid down the rule that when mob mind rules a crowd, the collective impulse is lower than the lowest impulse in any of its units.

For some reason never entirely clear to me, this mob spirit takes hold most strongly on the civilians. Perhaps that is because they cannot translate their thoughts into action. Nevertheless, all armies engaged in the late war trained their soldiers in hate as well as in arms. "Psychological preparation" became a cardinal principle of training. Y. M. C. A. workers and eminent citizens addressing the soldiers in their canteens, drill sergeants instructing them in bayonet practice, laid upon them the command of hate. These sulphurous fires burned up the last vestige of that which was once chivalry. "France, my

sweet enemy" sang England's soldier poet. How ill would this romanticist have fitted into the World War! In his place stands such as that militaristic professional soldier who once, to a Board of Morale on which I served, brought complaints against the chaplains. "They must be put under stricter control," he said. "They're not good for the men. Too many soft, Sunday-school ideas. I suspect that a lot of them are pacifists at heart. Some of them even idealists!"

Surely, in its compromise between Christ and Mars, Christianity never made terms with hatred —tearing, murderous hatred against unknown and unseen individuals. In all systems of Christian morals, hate figures as the little brother of murder. The Roman Catholic Church, preparing its communicants for confession, specifically classifies desire for revenge and cherishing an unforgiving spirit as violations of the Fourth Commandment; and Protestantism holds much the same attitude. That "righteous wrath" of which we hear so much in war is a mere phrase. It is perhaps possible for a man of exceptionally high, noble moral quality to loathe simply in a spirit of right and justice such a system as that of the old German Imperial government, and to kill the individual German in a spirit of love, as one

tenderly chloroforms a crippled pet dog. It may be possible—but it didn't happen.

If the soldier was by nature generous, kind, forgiving of offense, we set about to change him. Bayonet practice, the jabbing of a dummy German in vital points of the enemy, was a most effective piece of "psychological preparation," the sergeants in charge of this game invented a kind of hymn of hate, a familiar combination of American oaths chanted to the swing of the rifle. It went like this: "God" (present point) "damn" (swing back) *"you!"* (thrust). The hysterical, romantic literature of the war pictured men as they died in action calling on God's mercy or their mothers or crying with the last breath "vive La France!" How many, I wonder, died with the sergeant's Hymn of Hate upon their lips?

Let us try to strike a balance. On one side is the sacrifice of war; the boy who wishes to live and yet goes out to death for the highest thing he knows. None with a human heart in his breast will deny the beauty of his sacrifice. Those unknown soldiers of the Allied nations are symbols of a noble thing. Yet as war improves in efficiency, grows further and further away from the spirit of chivalry, and as the common man widens his intellectual horizon, the validity of his sacrifice decreases. In the late war, whole nations such

as France and Germany had before 1914 applied the principle of universal conscription. Not one French or German soldier in a thousand had any alternative but to fight for his country—except the disagreeable one of dying disgracefully before a firing squad. Nor, with the intelligent volunteer, was the act quite so fine and high as with the volunteer of three centuries ago. The man of the Twentieth Century knows too much to make the perfect military hero. Though his country need defending, he cannot, until Boards of Morale and agents of national propaganda hove done their work with him, achieve perfect confidence that his side is exclusively and eternally right and that the enemy, whoever he may be, is an enemy of God and all mankind.

Still, in places where the British have imperfect control, Hindu widows practice *suttee*—burn themselves alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The Hindu woman who performs this act voluntarily though reluctantly also does the highest thing she knows. Suicide because her husband dies is not the highest thing to a Christian English woman. It is not even heroic in her; it is considered by the moralists a case of quitting, by the theologians a cardinal sin. As we approach perfect understanding, as link by link the truth strikes off the fetters of superstition and out-

worn usage, we revise our moral values. We are in process of such a revision in relation to war. Giving one's life for his country will constantly become less and less commendable; living one's life for his country more and more heroic.

And as the gold of moral grandeur evaporates from one tray of the scale, the dross of hate, malice and all uncharitableness piles up on the other. How they balance, God alone knows; He alone can weigh such values. But the moral gain ended on the day of the Armistice; while the hatred lives and breeds its own sinister, misshapen kind. The evil that is war lives after it, the good is oft interréd with its bones.

## CHAPTER V

### KEEPING THE POISON ACTIVE

Lingering hatred against an enemy, especially a victorious one, has marked the aftermath of all wars. Germany defeated France in 1870, and tore the unwilling Alsace-Lorraine from the land of their allegiance. The French, in the decade that followed, hated Germany with a bitterness almost insane. We Americans of the older generation remember the mood of the South after the Civil War. Yet both these historic hatreds, lacking fuel, were dying within ten years; were within a generation for all practical purposes already dead. France was gradually letting Alsace-Lorraine fade into the vast background of old historic wrongs. Although certain zealots made their annual pilgrimage to the Strasbourg Monument in Paris, although the younger officers of St. Cyr still gnashed their teeth, not one Frenchman in twenty would have gone to war to recover the lost provinces. In 1906, fifteen thousand French schoolmasters demanded of the government that they be allowed to teach in the Public

Schools the follies of war, the blessings of peace. The government granted this boon. In its article headed "Peace," the Encyclopædia Britannica, edition of 1910, described France as the pacifist nation of Europe. A people in such a mood is not making hatred a governing motive in life. As for the South, the collapse of her economic life and the injustices of "reconstruction" somewhat prolonged her period of bitterness; yet within fifteen or twenty years it had simmered down to a little meaningless talk. By the beginning of this century, South and North were working together, governing together.

For in those inefficient days of hit and miss methods, the reactionary elements in our civilization had not learned the uses to militaristic plans of cultivated hate. It is going to be different from now on. The guns of Armageddon were scarcely stilled before ten thousand trained propagandists set themselves to perpetuate for political convenience the resentments and follies of the late war. A controlled popular press reiterated the old slanders against the enemy, invented new lies, dressed up half truths.

It serves the convenience of the present government in France to make the people believe that all Germany is gathering herself for a new spring. So, in an era when the French people are

naturally very tired of war, the militarists may nevertheless keep alive the war spirit. When the Armistice was declared, the experts of the Allied forces did a pretty thorough job in disarming Germany. It was quite impossible to gather up every rifle in the Reich, every machine gun, every broken-down cannon. But these experts did cause the delivery of military material in quantities so enormous that Germany could have no reasonable hope of fighting again for a generation. Further, they put a guard on every German steel factory, in order to see that no more arms were manufactured. Of course the Junkers, the two hundred thousand old professional officers and the militaristic class in general did not accept the verdict of Versailles. They began to gather and to hide such arms as they could find. In this, they had two motives. First, they hoped for a Royalist revolution to restore the Kaiser and the old régime. Second, having all the futility which marks a privileged class suddenly thrown up against realities, some of them still really imagine that they can fight France. From time to time, such caches are discovered. Three machine guns and a hundred rifles made a front page story in every Parisian newspaper. Among the tens of thousands of cannon used at the front, some with their bores worn out or with essential parts miss-

ing are always at the rear, awaiting repairs. Germany, like France and England, was at the Armistice full of such broken-down weaponry. The Junkers concealed some of these guns, doubtless with a few others in good repair. When such were found, the Parisian press made the type do a hysterical dance of fear and apprehension. Some one compiled the list of seizures reported by the daily press. Without doubt this included duplicates and cases of pure "fake." But the statistician of hate who did the work ignored all that. He estimated solemnly that enough arms had been found to equip from twenty to thirty German divisions. Even had his data rested on sound proofs, not upon mere sensational reports, his conclusion was full of holes. Nothing, positively nothing, was said about the condition of these arms; neutral military experts, knowing that a cannon is not a cannon unless it will shoot, laughed at such figures. But the French, apprehensive with the memory of two devastating invasions, accepted them only too readily. And they drew the inference which the propagandists intended. Germany, though now nominally a Republic, was the same Germany; a poisonous, treacherous serpent which, a little scotched, could still strike. Therefore she must be crushed without mercy, and—until crushed—she must be

hated with all the French heart and soul and mind.

As the Peace of Versailles through various successive misinterpretations became a peace of hate, the propaganda of the German conservatives bore fruit, even among those who would have seen the eternal devil keep his state in Berlin as easily as a Kaiser. In every defeated nation there arise quaint personages who can prove by incontrovertible facts that their side really won the war. The South knew such phenomenal thinkers after 1860, France after 1870. It is the only way to reconcile their pride with existence as members of a conquered nation. This peculiarity of the defeated, the Junkers proceeded to capitalize. The German army, they said, had been ever victorious. It was merely making a strategic retreat in order to gain a stronger position when the lying, treacherous Wilson broke down by his false promises the German civilian morale. Then came the revolution and surrender in the midst of victory. I need not perhaps tell any competent observer who witnessed at the Front the last days of the war, that this is all contrary to fact—the whole German strategic scheme stood on the verge of collapse. Nor did the German people at first generally believe this stuff. But the reactionary press and the imposing string of newspapers

purchased by the great industrial men hammered it into the German head. As the French and German opinion on reparations and security separated more and more widely, as Germany tried by chicanery to dodge her obligation, as France took irritating means of enforcing her demands, as emotion drugged reason, this theory gripped the German people, until even Social Democrats who laughed at the "ever victorious" theory in 1919, embraced it by 1923. With it, they swallowed its corollary. France was responsible. France had injected the poison into Wilson, engineered the betrayal. Therefore, hate France with "hate of the head and hate of the hand"—treacherous, grasping, cruel, immoral France!

Let the current of hate running between these two outstanding old rivals stand for the rest of Europe. Hate everywhere expressed in lunatic thoughts muttered from strained faces; hate universal, unreasoned, divinely ridiculous. Misled by sophistries and half truths no different in spirit, the Pole hates the Lithuanian and Russian, the Lithuanian and Russian the Pole; the Italian the Jugo-Slav, the Jugo-Slav the Italian; the Roumanian the Magyar, the Magyar the Roumanian.

Recently, the high priests of hatred have reached toward the very foundations of society. Deliberately, they are beginning in infancy this

education in the emotion essential to war. When the French entered Alsace-Lorraine, the government gave a Christmas party to the Alsatian children. A most eminent lady served among the hostesses. To each child she handed a picture book, professedly designed to "help make them French." This seemed like bringing coals to Newcastle. Whoever thinks that Alsace was not glad to rejoin the Republic did not witness the entry of 1919. The brief selections began with simple stories of France—her legitimate glories, her beauties, her eminence in the arts. For the rest it was hate—unadulterated vitriol. For example, one series of colored pictures, drawn in the spirit of our comic strips, showed a nice little Alsatian boy playing all kinds of tricks on a German because he was a German. Another reproduced the familiar figure of the blood-drunken brute. Now I repeat: it was scarcely necessary to instruct these children in loving France. The very fact of attendance at this party proved that their parents were of the Francophile element. And, indeed, that was not the object. They had lived their brief lives beside Germans. Some of them probably knew kindly old German gentlemen, German ladies who gave them kisses and cakes, congenial little German classmates. It was necessary to erase at once such immoral, unpatriotic impres-

sions and to teach them, as early as possible, "righteous hate."

Evidently this method seemed advisable not only for little Alsatians but for little Frenchmen. I have seen lately a copy of Fournier's First French reader, published by Gedalge, Paris, in 1921. This is the eighth edition, the four hundred and tenth thousand. Rapid calculation proves what a proportion of the French children in primary classes must be doing their first consecutive reading from this book. The fashions in the drawings show that it is an old reader current before 1914, but revamped for current circulation by six "readings on the Great War." The first of these (Reading Number 37) deals with the mutilated children. It revives a hate story which I have mentioned before. The scene is a school. Enter a Belgian boy from Dinant:

> The poor child, whose mother is a refugee among us, has both his hands cut off. It is the Germans who have so martyred him. They have killed also his father, his sister and his big brother.

Reading Number 38, "The Wooden Gun," tells an atrocity story very popular during the war. I do not say that this incident did not happen; but as none of the published accounts which I saw gave names, dates, or places, I view it with the

skepticism of a veteran journalist. As Reading Number 38 begins the story, a group of little boys in a Lorraine village are playing soldier with wooden guns and swords. Suddenly the Germans come. One of the children points his wooden gun, gives the order, "Aim! Fire!"

Is it possible? It is the turn of the brigands to be afraid. A seven-year old child has made them tremble. A soldier points his piece at this audacious child. A shot sounds; the child falls, struck in the heart. O Germans! What a crime, what cowardice! Are there among you no fathers who love their children?

Reading Number 41, entitled "The Cathedrals Of Rheims," is a dialogue between a mother and her little son. The deliberate bombardment of this irreplaceable building is, of course, one of many black spots on the German war record. However, here is how it comes off in the Fournier reader.

. . . The Cathedral of Rheims is in flames. To-morrow, perhaps, it will be only a heap of ruins.

"Why have they done that? A Cathedral—that is sacred to every one!"

"They respect nothing, these wretches! They have killed children, women, old men; they have finished off our wounded; they have burned the houses of our villages; they have bombarded our hospitals, our ambulances; they shrink from no crime which will injure us. . . .

"Tell me, my son," said my mother, searching to the very depths of my eyes, "you will not forget these crimes?"

"I promise, mother."

The same firm publishes *Pour Notre France,* a book of supplementary reading on the war for elementary classes. Sprinkled through it is the same thought which marks the First Reader. But the most noteworthy passage, to one who knows Europe, is in the introduction—a kind of dialogue between a master and his pupil:

"That word *Patrie* [your country] do you understand it, my children?"

"What is *La Patrie?*"

*"La Patrie is a living thing; it has a body, it has a soul."*

The italics are the author's, not mine. The teacher repeats, again in italics:

*"But your country has a soul!"*

These words, taken as they stand, may not at once appear so terribly significant. But here, in one phrase, is the basis of that State worship which generated German militarism, which in turn precipitated the World War.

Philosophical theory has more empirical bearing on the thoughts and actions of Continental Europe than the more practical-minded British

and Americans can readily comprehend. Under the doctrine by which the Pan-German ruled his people, the State has a soul. It is not a mere collection of individuals, it is a high, separate entity, demanding absolute loyalty; if necessary, absolute sacrifice. "The greatest good to the greatest number" is in this view merely an immoral republican fancy. It is one's duty to further the interests of the State, no matter if his act injures all the individuals who compose it. Still less has the individual citizen of any other nationality the least right or privilege in conflict with that supreme interest. Once this view is accepted with its corollaries, it follows that conquest, which advances the glory of the State, becomes finally a consecrated undertaking.

This, perhaps, is a digression. The stern, unescapable, fact is that in the schools of France, where up to 1914 those intelligent, pleasant, able French schoolmasters taught that war is an evil and that the best course for a nation is to find ways for getting on with her neighbors, are now forced whether they wish or no to mold the plastic mind of childhood into the grotesque, contorted forms of unreasoning hatred.

It is easy for her friends to forgive France. We who watched her through the war know how she

suffered from her second brutal invasion of a century. We know how isolated she feels since America and England withdrew their support, how tormenting is the fear that it will happen again. Her state of nerves is natural to a high-strung people. But the fact remains that her men of affairs are poisoning the minds of a rising generation.

Germany comes off no better by comparison. She, also, teaches hatred in her common schools. Germany, say her teachers, was before the war ringed with enemies. In the war, her armies were everywhere victorious. But Wilson persuaded the people to listen to his lying promises. Germany laid down her arms. Whereupon the brutal French, with their barbaric black troops, came to persecute the Fatherland. Therefore, Frances is to be hated—hated—hated!——"Hate of the heart and hate of the hand!" This educational propaganda, confined at first to districts and institutions controlled by the reactionary element, has spread to the other schools. Germany also is training a new generation of blind haters.

The chapter on Germany in the Belgian primary school geography makes the French first reader seem mild and loving by comparison. An eminent Viennese professor, writing to his friends

of the shocking conditions at home, concludes, "and to cap the climax we are teaching in the schools that same hatred which did so much to bring on the war." Roumania adds a touch almost comic. In the settlement of the war, she was given part of Transylvania. In some towns of this region, the Hungarian element preponderates. Yet the little Hungarian children are reciting from textbook breathing hate against their race. A friend who has seen this educational curiosity remembers one passage:

> Q. Who are the Huns?
> A. A savage and cruel people who swept down on the Romans and destroyed their civilization . . . they remained in brutal and tyrannical power for a thousand years.

Can we Americans afford to look down upon these frenzies of the European? After all, we are blood of their blood. Near my summer home in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, dwell the descendents of the Pilgrim Fathers, some carrying yet the original names, as Miles Standish and John Alden. The Miles Standish of our town descends in the tenth generation from his famous forebear of the *Mayflower*. And this is the very oldest white American blood. If we could gather and compile the statistics, we should doubtless

find the average American removed no more than three or four generations from the parent stock of Europe. Even ten generations—what is that in the history of a race? Circumstances have permitted us to eliminate from our thought that sense of the past which hangs like a stone about the neck of Europe, and to create a political system which has hitherto looked forward, not backward. Circumstances too, have delivered us from the intense economic and social rivalries produced by the crowded conditions of those old countries. But at bottom, we are the same people. Drop the average American into France, England or Austria as a baby, give him the education of the country, and he would as a man think, feel and behave like the people of his adoption.

Nor can we indulge any national conceit by holding ourselves superior to Europe in the spirit of tolerance. In the modern world, it is impossible to quarantine ideas and world emotions, good or bad. A hundred years ago, the monarchs and premiers of the Holy Alliance tried that; and Metternich, who had bent to the task every power of his subtle genius, was finally driven into exile by force of those liberal ideas which he had tried to kill. Ideas and common emotions blow like great winds across seas and borders; and the epidemic of hate rages among us also.

Only in America the disease takes a different form. Thanks to our former isolation, we have acquired no "hereditary enemies." When this vague emotion begins to disturb our bosoms, we take it out on each other. A half-baked farmer boy listens to an orator who proclaims that all Jews are Shylocks and usurers, bound by gory oaths to destroy Christianity, all Catholics idol worshipers and subjects of a sinister foreign power, all new immigrants filthy scum. So he joins bizarre orders which ride by night that they may rescue America from her peril. The venom in all this gives him a vaguely pleasant emotion, doubtless; it is like those diseased but agreeable moods which one has sometimes in a fever. The farmer boy would neither understand nor believe, if you told him that the bacillus from which he is suffering first appeared in the brain of some European reactionary, plotting for his own purposes to make everlasting the hates of the late war.

Never since the Civil War have we known in peace times such universal, unquiet hatred; we, who in 1913 were as a great family. The immigration problem presses for solution. I will not deny that foreign population has come of late too fast for assimilation to the best American ideals. But instead of treating the matter soberly and

reasonably, as I think we did once, we are melting into cauldrons of rage or freezing into icicles of cold national conceit. For the first time anti-Semitism—the invention of European reactionaries and absolutists to distract the national will of peoples—has achieved a foothold among us. Pseudo-scientists and pseudo-sociologists have created a new American literature of national conceit; they are prototypes of the Gobineaus, the Treitschkes and the Bernhardis who created in Germany the false, bloated pride which leads to a fall. In the slang of this gentry, the term "Nordic" holds place of honor. The original Americans were Nordic. The Nordic is the great race; wisdom and power will die with it. One able writer of this faction even divides our literature into Nordic and non-Nordic. There is some very decent work in the non-Nordic catagory, he admits; but it is distinguished always by a lack of order, proportion, taste, ulterior wisdom. Yet —to take the achievement which these prophets of national conceit would value most highly—the Romans, lawgivers to all Empires, the Spaniards, who opened up the Americans and held the greatest Empire known to the world, were not Nordic; and the French, for all their glorious national history, are only imperfectly so. To take other values, the Italians who for three centuries domi-

nated the spiritual, artistic and intellectual activity of Europe, are swart, black-eyed, non-Nordic. It is only a step further—we shall probably achieve something like that in a year or so—to the excesses of certain German professors who first drew political inferences from the Nordic racial theory. Your German, they say, is the only simon pure Nordic. In such races as the English, the crystal stream is badly adulterated. The English are able only in so far as they are Nordic. The same holds true, even in the inferior Latin races; throwbacks to Teutonic ancestors, planted in the South during the Germanic invasions, account for all their men of genius and eminence. For example, Giuseppe Garibaldi. Fix your mind on the third syllable of his surname—"bald." That is an old German root much used in Teutonic proper names. His light hair furnishes further proof that he was the recreation, under the Mendelian law, of some Teutonic ancestor who entered Italy with the Lombards. Dante, Da Vinci and Michael Angelo had dark eyes and swarthy complexions. However, in mind they too must have been throwbacks to Germanic ancestors lost in the haze of history. Their genius proves that.

Conceited nationalism and academic absurdity cannot go much further. If any one accom-

plishes this feat, it will be one of our own Nordic theorists.

We are considering war only in that aspect which concerns Christianity—its moral gain and harm. Again let us try to strike a balance. On the one side lies the sacrifice of the soldiers. If we add to that the sacrifice of the civilian, we have, I think, almost the whole positive moral value of war. And civilian sacrifice is a subject surrounded by a rosy aureole of fake. The average man or woman who ate war bread and endured meatless days did not act of his own pure moral volition. Actually or virtually he was ordered to do so. If he disobeyed, he incurred the penalties of legal arrest or social ostracism. Further, he was impelled by a far-seeking self-interest. If his side lost the war, things would go worse for him, not better. This last impulse governed many when they put their money into government bonds. Further, the social penalty had here its influence. The man who did not buy in good proportion to his means lost standing in the community. There were those, of course, who performed acts of sacrifice which ran contrary to their interests and their natural desires. Let me not belittle the heroism of that father or mother who said to the beloved volunteer, "Go, my son!"

Their activities and renunciations must be thrown into the scale with the soldier's sacrifice of comfort and life. "War work," however, introduces exceedingly tangled motives. Virtually no one outside of the leisured class—in which I include the unworking, unmarried daughters of people in only moderate circumstances—made bandages or ran canteens or drove ambulances. For this class, somewhat surfeited with the pleasures and plenties of a lavishly productive age, the war amounted to a new thrill; without danger and without undue hardship they lived in a whirl of agreeable excitement and untrammeled, unconventional social contact. I met one such at the Front —an expatriate American woman with a talent for brutal self-analysis—in late October, 1918.

"I believe the war is nearly over," said I, "everything points toward an armistice."

"Oh, don't say that!" she replied, "my *dear* war!"

Had most other war workers consulted their selfish desires alone, not their consciences, their sense of propriety or their higher spirit of altruism, I have no doubt but they would have agreed with her. One stock argument to prove the moral value of war, I dismiss as moonshine. This is the idea cherished by German, British and American militarists alike, that men grow soft

in peace; that war is necessary now and then in order to keep peoples hard. What kind of hardness? Ask the militarist that, and if he is off his guard he completes the vicious circle of his reasoning by answering that it is the kind of hardness which succeeds in war. Not even that is true, however, as any fair survey of our late and bitter experience will prove. Elsewhere [1] I have shown how little the men of Armageddon, as compared to those of past generations, knew in advance of war as a reality, and how much the valor of Armageddon exceeded that of Thermopylæ or Balaklava or Troy or any of the military episodes about which we write heroic ballads. "Hardness through war," was not the least of the air-puffed military theories which blew up in the heats of Armageddon. The great sacrifices of soldiers, the lesser sacrifices of civilians—in weighing moral values you have here all the factors which you may fairly put into the favorable scale.

Into the other scale we have put already the blind, blasting, soul-contorting, illogical hates of war. On that we must pile up five more years, so far endured, of hatreds only a little less violent and much more widespread. And looking into the future, we may fairly add whole races and generations whose souls, deliberately warped by

[1] *The Next War*, E. P. Dutton and Co., 1921.

miseducation, will live in violation of the second among the Great Commandments—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Who will say that the scales are even at balance now; that the moral good of war equals its harm? And I have not yet exhausted the evil effects of war on the souls of men and of peoples.

## CHAPTER VI

### WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

The State, says Spinoza, is not bound by the moral law. By inference, bearing false witness, stealing and killing, acts condemned when their victim is an individual, become virtuous when performed in the service of one's country. So he stated baldly and truthfully a principle which, however hypocritically denied, had long been tacitly accepted. In the Nineteenth Century, when hazy ideas of honor held small importance in the traffic of nations and commercial self-interest became the guiding motive, international relations ceased almost to have the decency of hypocrisy. Statesmen who in private life were sincere pillars of some established church, conspired in their public capacity to steal the documents of the enemy, to inspire by devious methods riots and murders among primitive peoples, to ruin the economic life of whole provinces. With full knowledge of what they were doing, they employed intelligence services whose spies, on behalf of the State with a soul, broke every law of God and

man. A school of melodramatic fiction centered round the operations of these secret agents; but even the imaginations of E. Phillips Oppenheim pale beside the reality. "Chiefs of section" inoculated weak but shrewd men with the drug habit and sent them out, under promise of more drugs, to gather information and documents. Women yielded up their chastity—and justified themselves in the act—in order to wheedle out of a love-sick general the enemy's military plans or out of a sentimental politician his diplomatic intentions. Thugs of the underworld plied the slung-shot and blackjack in order to steal papers or to remove men who knew too much and would not hold their tongues. And the diplomat himself capitalized and specialized untruth until the crooked principles of diplomatic intercourse which Machiavelli wrote half as satire in the sixteenth century, became accepted working theories in the nineteenth. When an ambassador or chancellor of embassy made a proposal or asserted a fact bearing upon diplomatic business, you could be sure of only one thing—that he did not mean what he said.

Early in the war, Herbert Hoover founded his Commission to feed ravished, starving Belgium. His staff consisted of Americans, mostly engineers, who had great natural energy and ability but no previous training in diplomacy. Within

six months Hoover and his men had performed the impossible, had created, as a British statesman put it, "a new power in Europe." They accomplished this result by a method so natural that they themselves were long unaware of its effectiveness. When they entered upon negotiations, they presented their case truthfully, stated their objects frankly. "We will do thus and so," they would say with the directness of business men proposing an honest deal, "if you will do this and that." The diplomats with whom they negotiated began at once to wonder what these Yankees really wanted. Of course, it wasn't what they said they wanted. . . . Thereupon, they granted the request at once, and waited for the next move. They were astonished and baffled when the Americans accepted and went ahead. This method should have worn itself out in time; but as a matter of fact it never did. They who governed international politics before the Great War could understand any diplomatic approach except the truth!

Yet we Americans as a nation cannot cast the first stone. Until 1914, international issues cut very little figure in our thought or our common interests. We were not circumstanced like Europe, where an increase in Austrian armament meant an immediate rise in French taxes, where

the absorption of an African province by England meant the failure of factories across the Rhine, where the shifting of a German strategic railroad meant hard times in Sweden. We solace our national conceit by memories of the generosities in American diplomatic history, as when we gave back to Chinese higher education our share of the Boxer indemnity. Yet when the shoe pinched, when our larger interests became vitally involved, we showed no more national morality than the Europeans. The methods by which we got the Panama Canal zone do not square with any system of personal morals above those of the caveman; and one of the best antidotes for American national conceit is to study the causes and preliminaries of the Mexican War.

No, the world had by the middle of the nineteenth century generally accepted the principle that the morals of nations have nothing to do with common morals. The world mind, however, was a little tangled. Men liked to believe that their own nation behaved honorably in the matter of keeping its promises. A strong minority body of opinion disapproved of the repudiation or violation of treaties. They were repudiated and violated, however; but always the statesmen who did the work found it necessary to invent some plausible excuse. Spinoza's principle of cor-

porate morals had found perfect acceptance. Machiavelli's "Prince" was now the guide to international politics.

All this in a period of peace. What, after that, could one expect when the peace broke into a desperate war of forty million men? Now nothing that was God's remained lovely and of good repute unless it served the purposes of Mars. "I don't want soft sermons about love from you, sir," said a Colonel to his Chaplain. "Give these men the stuff that makes 'em hard—hard!" The preacher who remained popular with the crowd and the government alike were those most zealous in calling down the curses of God upon the enemy. And the State, not the Church, made the ethics of this hectic period. Officialdom generally found it convenient to have moral soldiers. A man who does not drink or run after women or practice deception on his officers makes a better fighting machine; your soldier must above all things be healthy and dependable. Where personal morality became for any reason inconvenient, it was morality, not morale, which went by the board. The picturesque leading ladies of the war were the aviators. Their work involved a dreadful tension, unknown to men of other arms. In certain circumstances, ten minutes in the air could be ten days of apprehension, alertness, action and

strain. In this atmosphere, they who survived found after a year or so that their nerves were going. The ace of aces in the French army, after nearly two years of steady flying at the front, returned to Paris on leave and began to chase civilians on to the sidewalks with his automobile. Arrested, he was found to be raving mad. After a long course of treatment, he recovered. But this episode served as a warning to the officers in charge of aviation. An aviator must be "let down" at intervals, or he would betray by a curious telltale stutter the first sign of impending nervous break. The authorities began to give frequent leave, and to encourage these boys, either openly or tacitly, to "find a woman" and get thoroughly, satisfactorily drunk.

As the strain on all branches of the service tightened, they who directed army morale grew concerned about the condition of the infantry. When the weary ranks crawled back from the filthy, sleepless, hysterical atmosphere of the trenches to the little haven of the rest towns, more and more they showed the symptoms precedent to nervous collapse. They, like the aviators, must be "let down." Hence, here and there, brothels under semi-official sanction, brothels surrounded with sanitary precautions—but brothels nevertheless. European hotels have perhaps never been

especially careful in inspecting the character of their guests. But now—all bars came down. Scarcely a hotel in London, Paris, Rome or, I suppose, Berlin, but knowingly opened its doors to shady characters. The officers on leave wanted them. Lest I be misunderstood, let me here make exception of the American army. So far as my knowledge goes, we never adopted this treatment for mental symptoms. However, the "need" never arose with us. At the time of the Armistice only a very few of the American troops had seen more than seven months of fighting; for the French, German, or Belgian conscript who entered the army in 1914 and was lucky enough to survive, the war had gone fifty-two months. We had not yet reached the period of strain. In the same circumstances it is fair to assume that we might have followed European methods in repairing shattered nerves.

However, the significance of this immorality lies perhaps not in the fact but in the attitude toward it of the public mind. At the rear, no one, moralist though he might be, looked much askance at the peccadillos of the soldier on leave. In the background of every mind stood the vision of what he had seen and endured, must again see and endure. We remembered his days and nights among the rotting bodies of the newly dead, his

months under the pressure of subconscious fear, his long agonies in the hospital wards. Soon he must return to all that; most probably to his "rendezvous with death by some disputed barricade." Anything that made him forget, hectic or unnatural though that thing might be—he was welcome to it! "God will forgive," said some; but the most said, "What does it matter?"

What did it matter indeed? Half-mad as we all were, with that curious madness which is the atmosphere of war, we had for once laid hold on logic. In the Christian scheme of morals, a German is a human being with a soul. Civilians and soldiers alike, we were all working for the purpose of committing against that German the one act which law and custom hold to be a supreme violation of morals—killing. True, the accepted canon of morals specifically excepted killing an enemy in war; but if war so sweetened murder, why did it not sweeten lesser sins? The answer, tacitly accepted, was that it did.

As the war dragged on into months, years, spiritual aeons, the civilian population seemed to borrow from the soldier this dual standard of morals. "What did it matter—to us here as to them up there?" they would say, waving a hand toward the Great Line. Standards went down; the line ordinarily drawn between misconduct and

good conduct became hazy. The situation had its curious anomalies. The panegyrists of war called loud attention to the London police statistics, showing a diminution of arrests for crime and drunkenness. But these figures meant nothing, really. Professional crime is a young man's game; the thugs were away at the Front, where the army was making use of their native violences and subtleties. Drunkenness hampered the conduct of the war; the manufacture of alcohol consumed part of the food supply; and none so moral as a nation at war when morality marches with efficiency. Therefore all governments, the British among them, regulated the manufacture of beers and spirits and greatly reduced the hours when public drinking was permitted. But for the uncharted rest—month on month I saw peoples in bulk losing their hold on ordinary truth, decency, chastity and even common honesty. Arnold Bennett published in 1918 his novel *The Pretty Lady,* a study of contemporary upper-class morals. The British, though they stormed against the book, let it go to print; we, being at the moment especially afraid of unpopular truth in certain states suppressed it, just as we suppressed almost universally Barbousse's terrible but accurate *Le Feu.* In my experience *The Pretty Lady,* showing as it did a world which

had lost its moral rudder, was realistically true. What Bennett saw in England any observer with the same shrewd eyes might have seen in France or Italy, and, I have no doubt, in Germany or Austria.

Yet—and here was a contradiction which perhaps fooled the majority of observers—never did formal religion seem so vital as during the years between 1914 and 1918. I saw in the Sacré Cœur of Paris a congregation of three thousand people weeping on their knees for their sins and the sorrows of France; I saw the whole population of Boulogne following a religious procession, I saw the London churches, the English-speaking Protestant churches of Paris, crowded to the sidewalks. There were new shrines everywhere—even in the streets of London. Yet strangely enough many who lived most strictly by such observances were in their daily lives most at variance with the canons of common morality. The Church was an anchor, a rock of safety in a great storm. In the divine mercy of God lay one hope, and the only one, that William might come home alive from the Front, that John might recover from his wound, that one's own nation, the sure and certain vessel of the right, might emerge triumphant. But somehow—the cord which bound faith with the conduct of life had snapped.

The war ended; but the mere fact of peace did not cure the sickness of our morals. Back from the violences of war came the surviving boy soldiers. Only the strongest and sweetest among them, it seemed, had brought to the life of peace the ordinary morals of peace. Their souls bore scars. For five years our own newspapers have been proclaiming "crime waves"; but we, who bore so much less of the burden than the European nations, had also a lesser moral breakdown. The timid tourist who visited Europe before 1914 felt at least a sense of social security. The Continent as a whole might strike him as organized, ruled, even to monotony; but at least he stood in no visible danger of robbery or violence. But for two years after 1918 robbery and violence were constant problems to the European police. Bands of brigands terrified parts of Belgium and France. In Berlin, a modern Jack Sheppard led a gang so bold and defiant that they held up the very police stations. One entered certain parts of Europe with the apprehensions which must have disturbed a mid-Victorian British tourist visiting an early-day American mining camp.

Even revolutions have their rules and rhythms. For example, some humorous student of history has noted that every social disturbance dies down between noon and two o'clock—the rioters have

gone home to eat. Just so, all radical upheavals from the Jack Cade riots to Russian Bolshevism have about the same human composition. At the center is a body of zealots, believing in their special tenets, whether sound or unsound, with a passionate, all-consuming zeal; this zeal and devotion fades away until we reach the outer edge, which is composed of men who like revolution for itself—its violence, its looting, its freedom from ordinary restraints. This "criminal fringe" of all the revolutions or attempted revolutions since the Armistice has been so large as often to set the pace for the whole movement. From it proceed the outrageous execution of the Czar and his little daughters, the occasional bursts of cruel violence against priests or reactionaries or "traitors," which have marked the Bolshevik régime. Nor has the criminal fringe decorated only the radical forces. Some of the "white" armies which from time to time attempted to restore the old régime in Russia carried along noblemen and soldiers of fortune bitten by the same bacillus. "Gentlemen" they might be, with every advantage of education and environment; nevertheless war had bred in them that instinct for violence and for getting without paying which marks the criminal. One expedition which got some distance with Russia before it collapsed hanged every peasant

found occupying the lands of his former lord. In Berlin, I met a British officer who, hating Bolshevism, had joined a Crusade to rescue Russia. After a month he had resigned. "Bit thick for me," he said. "I've known some of those Russian chaps to get up in the morning, remark that they needed exercise before breakfast, and load up a brace of revolvers. Then I'd hear the shots going, out by the prison compound. . . ."

In Germany, not only did the Spartacides shoot up, without much plan or method, nearly every city; but the government forces put down these revolts with every sign of relish in the act of killing. No episode of revolution is much more horrible than the final extinction of Spartacism in Berlin. Picked up on the streets, often condemned without semblance of trial, the miserable creatures were herded by hundreds into a stone-walled prison yard. And then—Germans who listened from without have described to me not how it looked, for none witnessed this scene except victims and executioners, but how it sounded. First, a wail as of the damned in agony as the victims realized what was going to happen. Then an instant of pregnant silence; then the rattle of the machine guns, punctuated with moaning. The guns would stop, but the moaning would continue, showing that the victims were not all dead. From

the emplacements on the walls would come raucous, mirthless, insane laughter—and the guns would rattle again.

Indeed, Germany as I saw it during 1920 furnished a fine laboratory study in the moral after-effects of war. Here, before 1914 State worship had its most revered shrine. The average German had been educated to believe in the State with a soul, whose glory and good "sweetened all methods." Though the atrocities of her army have been exaggerated, the fact remains that Germany made war more ruthlessly than any of her Western enemies, and did by so much the more surrender the ethics of Christ to those of Mars. One would expect, therefore, a correspondingly greater drop in personal morals; and exactly that happened.

Before the war, Germans were famous for their commercial honesty. International banking firms, rating "moral risks" by nationalties, placed the British first, the Germans second. If this honesty showed here and there conspicuous flaws, that was part of the faulty German system. In their conception of public policy, foreign commerce ranked with the army, the navy and the Kaiser as an integral part of the state machine. To advance German foreign commerce in general was a sacred duty; and the "State has no morals." Therefore,

when corruption served this end, German trade agents were great bribe givers. The fact that they seldom reversed the process and took bribes approves their purely personal integrity. Perhaps I need not say all this to Americans; most of us know the Germans among us, and however we may dislike their imperfect Americanism we have had no cause to doubt their personal responsibility. By 1920, all this had changed—in the Fatherland at least. While the working-class districts dragged out existence on turnips and potato bread, a loud, vulgar, ostentatious class held high revel in the great cafés of Berlin. Ask any respectable German who these people were, and he would answer with a shrug of his shoulders *schiebers* (grafters). Some of this gentry made their new money by speculating in the falling mark. Most of them, however, battened on the weakness of the new Republic. By fraud, chicanery and corruption they exported goods which their country needed in order to rebuild her economic life, they imported forbidden luxuries, they dodged tariffs and export taxes. And this gentry it seemed to me, set the pace for all Berlin. You could get nowhere without bribery. Foreigners returning after the war to do business with former German associates found that the old, direct method would no longer serve. To get anything

done, they must grease a dozen eager palms. Tipping a subordinate to betray his employer was a proceeding so common as to reach the status of the legitimate.

Berlin, like Paris and London, had its "pleasure districts" before the war. Which assayed lowest in virtue, none can say. As any one who has even scratched the surface knows, those two or three square miles of Paris about Montmartre and the Boulevards do not in any way represent French life or even Parisian life. No more did the corresponding district represent Berlin. That was only an ulcer, famous but insignificant. About it, Germany in general maintained a reasonable degree of morality and propriety. In fact, the Germans were even a trifle conceited in their virtue, pointing to their large families as proof that the clear stream of German purity had not been corrupted through its contact with the surrounding lesser breeds.

That, too, had suffered a war change. On Unter den Linten at night, women of the street in droves assailed the pedestrian. These were not painted ladies, either; looks, dress and manner betrayed them as members of the working or clerical class, probably employed during the day. In detail, I remember still a woman whom I marked one night outside of the Hotel Adlon. She

was stodgy, middle-aged, motherly and respectable in appearance; I had been noting with amusement that she might just have stepped out from a sewing circle in a Western town. She approached—and solicited me. Now this was not a period of unemployment. Virtually any one in Berlin could get work. However, the mark had begun its antics, and wages had not kept pace with the rise in cost of living. Everyone wanted a little extra money for more food, for worn-out necessities or for small luxuries. By thousands, these German women were going out to get it in the old, familiar easiest way. "Frankly," said a shrewd and reliable observer of his countrymen, "we don't go out in Berlin society any more. It has become too nasty to be either amusing or stimulating." The burgomaster of a Rhine village spoke to me with tears in his eyes concerning the change in the girls of his town. "We were so proud, once, of their virtue! We said, 'As is the lily among flowers, so is the Rhineland girl among women.' And now—I couldn't show you our police records. Too many good families would be ashamed if any one knew some of the names."

Of German youth and its moral outlook, Georg Brandes, the Danish critic, wrote as follows, in 1923:

> As Russia will soon produce nothing but sects, so does the young generation of Germany produce nothing but revelings . . . they are dreaming of the coming of a new religion, they are paying homage to glib and empty-headed prophets . . . they cultivate the mysticism of Asia and half-Asia. . . . Still less do the intellectual youths begin with the beginning, as should be, by reinstating honesty and by turning against the desperately loose morals, against shiftlessness, theft, fraud, violence and murder.

Indeed, if you want proof of what war has done to our generation, look around you. Will any one venture to maintain that the world obeys the moral law in 1923 as strictly as it did in 1913? In America, it is true, we have initiated Prohibition, which has reduced the number of arrests for minor crime and disorders. However, the preliminary work of Prohibition was all done before we took up arms; the capstone was laid as a military measure during our war. War or no war, the Eighteenth Amendment would have come just the same. For the rest—never did the old-fashioned moralists of any age view with such logical alarm the ways of the younger generation. With every allowance for the natural tendencies of a middle-aged man to deplore new things, I cannot find this alarm wholly unjustified. I realize that some of their irreverence is but tilting at things which had better not be revered—the

mealy-mouthed hypocrisies on which we of the Victorian age were nourished and reared. As they look at me with their clear but sophisticated eyes, they seem to say: "Well, we've taken your world as we found it. Your generation made it. If we can't make a better world. . . ." I should despair of life did I not think that they will arrive in time at new conceptions of morals just as high as the ones in which we were reared, and less blind. But whoever denies that there is at present more old-fashioned sin in the new generation than in the last, marks himself as a blind, mid-Victorian romanticist or an incurable optimist. And does any one doubt that this brand across the shining face of youth is a scar of the Great War? In the heats and illusions of 1918, certain enthusiasts visioned a world-wide religious revival. It has always been coming; but it has never arrived.

Again and finally, let us try to strike the moral balance. For war, its voluntary sacrifices; against war, its hates, now perpetuated to last through decades and even centuries of peace, its ethical confusion which results in the atrophy of common honesties, decencies and purities; and finally its subtle corruption of a whole rising generation. Where, now, stands the balance? Can any one with clear eyes and uncorrupted soul maintain that it favors war!

## CHAPTER VII

### THE KINGDOM

Now, having seen that war lowers the morals and weakens the spiritual forces of the generation which wages it and of the generation that follows, let us widen the scope of our inquiry. A church as a working organization has one great practical objective. That is to present at the judgment seat as many white souls, strong souls, saved souls, as it possibly can. And this purification, strengthening or salvation must not be limited to any color or class; else the Church had disobeyed the command, "preach the gospel to all nations." As a working means to the end, any church under broad leadership concerns itself as I have said before, with man's moral environment. Nor does it limit its concern to the more obvious immoral influences, such as vice-districts and gambling houses. Just as strongly, it fights poverty and ignorance; for poverty and ignorance, in mass, weaken and sicken the better part of man. True, the saints and recluses of the Catholic churches, the missionaries and evangelists of the Protestant

have often for their soul's salvation given all they had to the poor and gone down the world as paupers. But this was voluntary, whereas most poverty in mass is wholly involuntary. The strugglers of the slums live as they do, not because they choose but because they must. Now foul, crowded quarters where both sexes occupy the same narrow rooms, reeking streets where children play about garbage cans and bonfires, dark factories where men, women and children work all their waking hours for a wage which scarcely keeps soul and body together—even if we limit our conception of right and wrong to literal interpretation of the Ten Commandments, such conditions make not for morality. On the contrary, both common experience and police statistics prove that the slum of this kind is the breeding ground for impurity, dishonesty, crime.

"Lead us not into temptation," prays the Church. Poverty and economic degradation are corporate means of temptation. Wherefore the Church, if it proposes to be a doer of the word, not a mere mumbler of empty formulas, must needs concern itself with poverty. Any preventable calamity which forces great masses of population below the decent and reasonable standard of living should become at once the legitimate concern of Christianity.

There is a viewpoint, indeed, higher even than that. Upon our churches has been dawning a perception that the material progress of the past century is not wholly a material matter; that, somehow, it may yet serve the purposes of the spirit. That the children of a laboring man used two hundred years ago to go barefoot, whereas now they have shoes, is not in itself a fact with which morals and theology have any concern. But, save in isolated instances where some industrial baron holds wicked sway, the so-called "working class" possesses, because of our material progress, a host of spiritual advantages entirely beyond his grasp three centuries ago. For example, all the best literature of the world, all the highest thought simplified for the commonest understanding, is usually his for the asking. He can read; and steam, electricity, modern chemistry have made books cheaper and commoner than bread. Any night, you may sit in a café of Lille or Dresden or Prague and hear men with horn-gloved hands debating on the philosophy of Kant, the music of Wagner, the theories of Bergson. Of course, not all the conversation in these cafés is so absorbed in things intellectual; still, it would compare favorably with the talk at the average country club! In Brussels stands the *Maison du Peuple* (House of the People) built by the laboring class.

Its beautiful frescoes are the work of painters risen from the ranks of the workers and by them educated. In its auditoriums and lecture rooms one may for a few pennies witness the best modern drama, for nothing hear expounded the best modern learning.[1] In 1916, I attended the British Trades Union Congress at Birmingham. They who took the floor spoke with the logic, the orderly arrangement, the background of information, which distinguished the educated man—whether that education has been obtained at a university or at a pine-knot blaze. On the same occasion, I attended several ordinary union meetings. The speakers here were lesser men; often their accent was uncouth and their grammar faulty; but they did show that they had the same sure foundations of culture.

Compare these modern working men with the "unlettered hinds" of feudal times. Certainly, the hinds had the Christian religion. Possibly, as great a proportion of them as of the corresponding class to-day knew "salvation." Possibly—but not probably, I think. I cannot argue the case positively, having no exact facts any more than have my opponents. But as I read between the

[1] This institution is the work of the moderate Belgian Socialist party, opposed to the Belgian Established Church. However, the Catholic Labor party has similar though less prosperous institutions.

lines of history, I seem to perceive in the hind class those same vices of poverty which breed in our own degraded slums—lechery, festering envy, small spites, violence. It is a significant fact, for example, that in periods of hard times the Kings of France and England festooned every cross-roads with hanging bodies of serfs and varlets who had taken to highway robbery.

Yielding this point, however, admitting that the percentage of religion and of its concomitant simple virtue was as great then as now, more, much more, remains to be said. We deck our pulpits and lecterns with flowers; we burn fine incense at our altars; on our shrines and churches we have lavished the best music, painting, sculpture, building, of fifteen centuries. God demands, and the believer cheerfully gives, the highest expression of the human spirit in art and thought. And if perfection in mere stone and pigment and fluting reeds be an acceptable offering to God, how much more must be perfection and transformation of the Vessel of the Holy Ghost—humanity! Which better serves the glory of God—men who believe and are saved through belief, only because no one has offered them any choice, or men who know that matter is composed of electrons and atoms, that the world revolves through space, that sickness arises not from

demoniac possession but from bacilli, and who, knowing all this, still believe? Which is the more exalted sacrifice to God—an ignorant mind or a mind developed up to the limit of its powers? I cannot question but that in opening the wisdom and beauty of this world to the average, common man, we are serving the highest. If this is not so, let us logically strip the ornaments from our altars, smash the stained glass in our windows, and worship again in stables or catacombs. Beauties of wood and stone and pigment will not avail us if we deny God the beauties of the spirit.

Indeed, this conception widens until it embraces our planet as a whole and all that exists upon it. If the Judgment came to-morrow, which would be the better offering to the Fires of the Eternal—a world of slums and hovels, starvation and wretchedness, or one of gardens and blossoming stones, of plenty and righteous happiness? Creating that world is man's practical application of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," and in this view the material blends insensibly with the spiritual. Our burst of production in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whatever its injustices here and there, makes toward fulfillment of the Kingdom. Some day, when we have mounted up still more machinery for the service of man, have brought under control of law and

democracy our surplus of goods, we may abolish undue degrading poverty and undue corrupting wealth, may give all men the security and leisure to cultivate the things of the spirit. It need not be, it will not be, either a Godless world nor yet a "soft world." Our faith is indeed frail if we do not believe that in all the voyages of the human mind into the structure of the universe, it will still find at the end the incontrovertible fact of God. As for softness, one who has known many people and many peoples both in peace and war must perceive that the ideal world can never eliminate, even though it try, the factors making for spiritual discipline. Until the millennium, we shall not dispense with death. Still in our youth we must behold the tearful mystery of our forebears sailing out into the peaceful ocean of unnumbered souls. Still, as approaching age dusts our hairs, we must see old friends begin to drop out one by one. Still from plastic childhood to molded age we must control our lusts, our greeds, our great and small unkindnesses. Still must we go through the rigid self-discipline of applying ourselves to the day's task. Extreme poverty, of which so much romantic nonsense has been written by people who never knew it, is no ideal hardener of souls, any more than is war. More often, in my observation, it crushes souls.

The science of mathematics, carried far enough, turns a complete circle and blends with mysticism. Just so, when Christianity is conceived and practiced largely and broadly, it takes into its scope what some poet has called the dismal science of economics. Wealth and the processes by which it is created become a matter of vital interest to the Church. Indeed, this is only pouring old wine into new bottles. The Judean-born religions always concerned themselves with the just and orderly distribution of wealth; else the Commandment "Thou shalt not steal" had not figured in the Decalogue.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WAR CEASES TO PAY

How does war fit in with this material aim of Christianity, this creation of the Lord's Garden? The question, it seems to me, should answer itself in the mind of any reader who has followed events since the Armistice of 1918. Once, when the world was sparsely populated and the raw materials of production plentiful, war often, though not invariably, paid the victor. Rome at the height of her glory was so rich that not only did her nobles dwell in palaces furnished with every luxury known to the age, but hordes of the populace lived and amused themselves without labor on bread and circuses furnished by her surplus wealth. All this she gained not by industry nor invention, but by the power of the Roman short sword. Anomalously, war sometimes worked to the economic benefit of both victor and vanquished. Rome found the Gauls using bronze for tools and weapons; she gave them steel. Working at first as serfs, the native Celts learned from Roman foremen their more expert methods

of production. A century after Rome took over Gaul, the natives, though they had yielded up their liberty, had improved their economic status, were producing more current wealth than they would have done in many centuries had the Roman left them alone.

However after the Renaissance, when we began building the modern world structure, the law that warfare paid the victor constantly applied less and less. Finally the Great War, which proved so many things hitherto only suspected, established the law that the trial of battle no longer pays any one. Taking the vanquished first, Austria and Germany lost. Austria was dismembered. After five years of close living under war conditions, the central part which gave its name to the old empire endured five years more of slow starvation. From this period she emerged wan and weakened, to a grinding poverty which will envelop that last surviving Austrian who remembers the Great War. The subsidiary nations of Austria, liberated though they may be, will fare in our lifetime but little better. Germany for a while maintained a false façade of good times which fooled no competent observer. Whatever be the outcome of the reparations question, Germany, before 1914 the most prosperous and creative nation of Western Europe, will during all

our lives have her nose close to the grindstone. She may—I grant this to the French chauvinist—yet win a comparative victory. If France must continue to maintain a large army for the collection of reparations while Germany goes unarmed, then Germany is the relative economic winner. But by no possibility will she win in the absolute. None can conceive a turn of events by which Germany in 1960 or 1975 will be as rich as she would have been but for her adventure of 1914.

As for the victors: Great Britain is par excellence an industrial state, as in slightly lesser degree is Germany. Except for coal, she produces virtually no raw material. A nation in that situation lives by its export trade. Now Germany, together with her subsidiary nations, was Britain's best customer. A ruined Germany, Britons have found in the sober afterthought of war, means a crippled England. And she is crippled; her slums, into which the hectic fires of war threw a few impermanent glints of light, have become dark again. If Germany does not make reasonable recovery, England must send out to her colonies or to foreign lands those surplus millions who now beg in all her streets. Even if Germany fares as well as any one may expect, Great Britain too must know her generation of poverty.

France, on the surface most prosperous of the

Allied Nations, is still the most perplexed. The explosions and fires of war destroyed more property in her North than any detached observer expects Germany ever to rebuild. Her war debt has mortgaged every material object in France, from a shoestring to a railroad, up to more than fifty per cent of its value. She won back from Germany the Lorraine iron mines, which are virtually useless without German coal; her sole advantage here, in case the territorial situation remains stable, will be participation in European steel profits. It will not be enough, by many and many a billion, to wipe out her war debts. France invaded the Ruhr coal basin, where, as things stand at present, she sits holding a wildcat by the tail and knowing not how to let go.

Let us imagine an extreme event—that France stays, annexes the Ruhr with all its property, and now owns in fee simple as Germany did before 1914 both the coal and iron resources of West-Central Europe. First, owing to technical and political reasons too long for review here, the transfer of ownership and exploitation involves so much trouble and expense that the French might more cheaply open an unimproved coal field—if they had one. Second, during all the years of the readjustment she must maintain an army of occupation costing hundreds of millions

a year. Let us suppose, however, that she accomplishes all this without collapse. Probably, she can never use this coal and iron so well as Germany. She has not the population, nor the special talent for mass production of cheap, basic commodities. Still, at best, she may assume some such position toward Britain as Germany held before the war. What then? Her best foreign market, like Great Britain's, has hitherto lain among the Germanic peoples. Before the Great War, Germany furnished most of the common, coarse articles used in France. In return, France sent into Germany those finer goods which the Germans could not imitate. In any manufacturing that requires art plus industry, France holds a natural monopoly. No nation has ever been able to compete with her in such items as perfumes, brocaded silks, the finer grades of kid gloves, and—this is almost axiomatic—women's gowns of the better and more beautiful sort. These are luxuries. The nation which buys them must needs be prosperous. Take away both the coal which belongs to Germany and the iron ore which she stole in 1871, and Germany in mass cannot buy luxuries. The best and most enduring industries of France would find themselves in the position of a merchant who had stocked his shop with exquisite goods and then alienated his best

customers. France would be in much the same quandary as Great Britain. The time might come, after perhaps a generation, when France traded places with Germany in the European economic scheme—became the best customer of England, exchanged her heavy, coarse, steel products for the products of some new special industries developed in Germany. But the expense of such a change would be almost as staggering as the expense of the Great War. And having accomplished this shift, France would probably run the same course as Germany—bloated prosperity, the vices of the spirit bred of conquest, and then the great downfall.

I have been proving the obvious, perhaps. Only a few reactionaries—of whom, unhappily, these United States have their due share—are so suddenly blind as to believe, after the experience of 1914–1918, that war between closely populated, intensively organized nations can any more be made to pay.

The causes of this change in the economic bearing of warfare on society are not perhaps so obvious or so generally understood. Why did war usually pay Rome, the Frankish Kingdom, even Spain of the Philips, where now it cannot pay Great Britain or France or Germany? There are three main reasons.

First is the enormous cost, in proportion to national resources and current production, of equipping and conducting modern armies. Up to the period of preparation for the Great War, the art and science of killing men had scarcely benefited at all from the great burst of scientific and industrial energy which marked the nineteenth Century. But the intensity of preparation between 1870 and 1914, and still more the intensity of the struggle once battle was on, gave an enormous impulse to the invention and device of tools for killing and of auxiliaries to those tools. Speaking loosely but not with entire inaccuracy, when we entered this period we were, as regards the munitionments and mechanical auxiliaries of warfare, in the era of hand labor; when we left it, we were far into the era of machine labor. Now, of course, the initial cost of a machine is much greater than that of a mere tool. In the world of industry, however, the machine brings back its initial cost and much more by turning out more goods, creating more wealth. But any instrument which we make for war is not a means of production but only of destruction and consumption; not a working machine but only an eating machine. The absolute cost of equipping, arming and supplying the soldier or sailor has with every big invention increased in a proportion

roughly like geometrical progression; even taken in relation to the resources and current wealth of the country, it has increased in arithmetical progression. Further, the number of men engaged in proportion to the man power of the nation has increased steadily toward the limit of possibility. Some historical statistician who wishes to do a real service for peace will one day compute for us the relative cost—in that real unit of value, the day's work—of maintaining a soldier at the front during, say, the wars of Marlborough, the Napoleonic wars, and finally the Great War. Going further he will compute or estimate the comparative cost of wars and preparation for wars in proportion to current national production. Without anticipating his results by any guesses of my own, I feel sure that when he plots his curves he will find a sharp upward tendency which will become like an Alpine peak as it reaches the three decades just past. If we maintain this habit of war, that curve will rise higher still.

Second among the causes for the decline in the profits of war is the increased destructiveness of modern weaponry. Hand in hand with this goes a method of barbaric warfare abolished by the Code of Civilized Warfare but revived when that code broke down—destroying your enemy's property not only for war purposes but for peace pur-

poses. Man's progress in this world consists mainly in transforming natural forces. Our civilization is a struggle with nature—not so much to balk her forces as to lift her works artificially to a higher level of use. But Nature still holds her fortress; do we but relax our vigilance, she sallies forth and overwhelms us. When we render our complex inventions back to Nature, she resolves then not into the form in which we took them from her, but into their elements, ready for her own re-creation. It is therefore infinitely easier to destroy the works of man than to create them. The house in which I write was built a hundred years ago. Its erection took many men many weeks of labor. Much more labor, in the course of a century, has gone into the business of upkeep—maintaining its original soundness. With no more effort than lighting a match and touching off the pile of dry wood in the cellar, I could resolve it within an hour into smoke, ashes, shapeless masses of stone.

During the past three centuries of unprecedented invention and mental energy, we as a race have been much more interested in building than in destroying. That is one reason why the devices of warfare have been until recently so inferior to the devices of production. Yet even the comparatively primitive weaponry with which we

entered the Great War showed astonishing possibilities of physical destruction. Schoolhouses, town halls, churches, were destroyed in a flash by one shot fired from twenty miles away. Never in the previous history of warfare was the very land, which is the foundation of all wealth, spoiled for the uses of man. But great areas of Belgium and Northern France, by the blowing away of the top soil and the chemical transformation of poison gas, were put out of production for a generation.

The Great War merely started us to thinking on the higher mechanical possibilities of destruction. Since the Armistice, the work in the Devil's laboratories has gone merrily on. Until recently, I had supposed that explosives as a method of warfare were going a little out of date. Other mechanical and chemical means, conspicuously poison gas, electricity and disease-bearing bacilli seemed to offer more sinister possibilities. I had supposed that explosive, which drove out the bow and arrow, was in turn giving way to a superior machinery of death.

However, the reliable and credible Lord Robert Cecil, in his tour of America for the League of Nations, dropped a piece of news whose importance generally escaped attention. He spoke of a new discovery in explosives by which the power of bombs has been increased *one hundred times.*

I have seen a whole block of stone buildings annihilated by one hit from a raiding aeroplane. A bomb with one hundred times as much power would blow into powder a whole district of a great city. Two or three squadrons attacking in waves could make a junk pile of Manhattan Island.

Destruction of property without obvious military reason was, I repeat, barred by the Code. But where is the Code now? Since chivalry broke down and the Church of Christ found itself a bound captive in the train of Mars, no one, save here and there a weak, insincere apologist for militarism, even refers to the Code as a living force. The Germans, in a rather hesitant fashion, showed the way. As soon as they held secure possession of Lens, from whose rich veins France drew more than half of her native coal, they "drowned out" the mines. This process was very simple and effective. They simply turned streams of water into the mouths of the shafts, making such a morass and mess below ground that to reopen the properties would take more time, cost more money, than the veins were worth. The German government defended this action as a "purely military measure."

Now I knew that Lens front while the fighting was on it, and have since the Armistice made a pretty thorough inspection of the ruined mines.

And I have convinced myself that the purpose behind this destruction was not military at all, but economic. If they were thinking in purely military terms, the Germans had but to run water connections up to the mouths of the shafts and, at the moment when a French attack looked dangerous, turn on the water. The mines would have been destroyed before the French could have saved them. No, Germany saw that here was a chance to cripple a rival; make her, when the war was done, a commercial vassal. And so well have we incorporated this principle into our militaristic and nationalistic thought that certain French extremists in 1923 advocated similar tactics on an enormous scale. The "security of France" is the keynote of the European situation. Few Frenchmen, remembering the horrors and humiliations of 1870 and 1914, believe that Germany can be anything but a bitter enemy, waiting to pounce upon them. Germany has more than sixty million inhabitants with a rising birth rate; France less than forty million with a declining birth rate. Germany has the best coal veins in Europe; France has little native fuel. The guaranties against German aggression adopted or proposed at the Versailles Conference have fallen away from France one by one. So Frenchmen of the old school see no security but nibbling into

Germany. This, not reparations, has motived most French diplomacy since the Armistice. As I write this she holds the Ruhr, Germany's greatest coal-mining and steel-making district. And among themselves, some of her highest-placed soldiers and statesmen now discuss the policy of destroying the industrial Ruhr—flooding out the mines, burning the great steel plants such as Krupp's and Thyssen's.[1] All this they propose in a period of nominal peace, and solely in order to cripple the resources of a potential enemy. The present trend of military thought runs contrary to the spirit of chivalry. In any future war, the destruction of the enemy's property in order permanently to weaken him will enter into the plan of strategy. It seems that you cannot make an economist out of the average soldier, no matter how great. A specialist of rather a narrow order, he usually fails in any attempt to weigh social and economic factors or to read politics in any language except that of force. In war, soldiers or those who see only level with soldiers hold control of nations. These people cannot understand that to destroy or reduce the productive capacity of any nation is to destroy or reduce its purchasing capacity; that to win a war

[1] This view, let me say in all fairness, does not express the general public opinion of France.

on these terms means eventually the dwindling of your own markets and the injury of your own prosperity. Then, too, these people, like the nation behind them, will be in a state of war-psychosis. Destruction of the enemy and all things that are his will appear righteous and natural. They will be no more capable of reasoning facts to a sober conclusion than a council of lunatics.

If her small clique of militant reactionaries should ever get control in France, and should carry out the plan to destroy the Ruhr district, they might conceivably win security for France. But the partial destruction of Germany's power to buy from them would tend to leave France poorer. And at this moment we are dealing only with the question whether modern war pays in dollars and cents.

This, the second factor working in the modern world to make war commercially unprofitable, blends with the third—the increasing size and complexity of the world machine. Drop a hairpin into the small, simple mechanism of a grindstone and you do no harm. Drop it into certain parts of a big electric dynamo, and you may blow up a whole power line. When the Romans conquered a barbarian tribe and consolidated it into a province, they were dealing with a self-sufficient

people. To the Gauls of 200 B.C., a blockade of their borders meant nothing. Their fields raised and their hands wrought everything they needed. Conversely, any destruction of fields or buildings or "human material" in Gaul meant little to the general prosperity of Rome.

With the growth of nations and the improvement of transportation, that gradually changed. By the end of medieval times, certain corners of the world, like the old Venetian Republic, did feel often the fluctuations in values and the loss of purchasing power caused by wars of other nations. And still, it counted but little on the whole. Until well into the modern era, most of the European nations felt only slightly the reduced production of others. The great trade routes, like that chain which ran from Bruges to the Indies, carried mainly such luxuries as silks, jewels and spices; and few could afford luxuries in those days. Wool, raw or manufactured, was almost the only standard commodity customarily imported and exported.

We changed all that in the nineteenth century, especially in its latter half. We built up by insensible degrees the mighty, complex structure of international trade, international credits and finance. It took the late war and its aftermath to show us how complex we had made our world

machinery. In 1861–1865 these United States fought our great Civil War; in 1870, Germany fought France. Then the United States was not as yet an industrial nation. Our part in the international scheme was the production of raw materials such as cotton and foodstuffs. At that, the blight on production of southern cotton brought woe to the Lancashire weavers; but still the Civil War disturbed world industry comparatively little. Neither France nor Germany had in 1870 fully entered the industrial era. They were still agricultural nations, nearly self-sufficient. Their war too, intense as it was while it lasted, did not much embarrass the surrounding nations. Germany, for a generation at least, made the French War pay. Perhaps it will be written down in history as the last instance of the kind. This, I have always believed, was mostly accident. In taking over Alsace-Lorraine, the German jingo thought not of the Lorraine iron fields but of "historical" and dynastic claims. They did not yet appreciate the fullness of their native wealth in coal nor the astonishing results which would follow from the marriage of Ruhr power and Lorraine raw material. At that, this militaristic theft, while it gave unparalleled prosperity, was perhaps the cause of Germany's destruction. What the Germans gained by the

sword they must keep by the sword. Their intense, super-efficient military preparation passed from the defensive attitude to the offensive, generated the madness of 1914; and the end of that nation was worse than its beginning.

Forty-four years elapsed. The sword of the World War slashed through the new improved world structure, so that we could study it in cross-section. We found within a month that Belgium, shut off by land and sea, must be fed by neutral charity or she would starve. Belgium was the most densely populated nation, in manufactured goods the most productive for her population, in all Europe. She raised less than seventy per cent of her own foodstuffs. Great Britain was from the beginning in much the same quandary; when, in 1917, the intensive submarine campaign threatened to blockade her coasts, she acknowledged that two years of such conditions would finish her.

However, this situation may best be studied in the neutral nations where hectic, unnatural activity in munitions manufacture did not complicate the situation, conceal the true nature of war prosperity. Spain is the most important European nation which remained unaffected by the war. Down in her southeastern corner lies Catalonia, centering round the industrial city of

Barcelona. To this one district came sudden prosperity. Her industrial magnates made a great deal of money out of aeroplane engines and uniform cloth. Even the working class prospered mightily—for a time. With the end of the war came a slump; even Catalonia, calculating her profits over a period of ten years, did not profit by the war. And Catalonia is exceptional. Generally speaking, Spain lingers in the agricultural stage—which makes her the better example. Her most valuable exports are her superb horses and mules, and her semi-tropical fruits. With the outbreak of war, the live stock market soared. The breeders of northern Spain sold their horses and mules to the Allies at bonanza prices. This went on until the native breeding stock stood in danger of depletion; and the government prohibited the exportation of animals. The breeders, before the war was over, spent all their easily gained margins and more, owing to the rising price of imported necessities. As for the South, whence came Spain's oranges, lemons, table grapes and sweet wines—her state, precarious from the first, became tragic. By 1917, travelers along the roads of Andalusia beheld the singular spectacle of men begging for bread under trees which were dropping over-ripe oranges. Man cannot live by fruit alone. Spain has good coal

fields which she had neglected to develop. There was no way of developing them in the existing circumstances. Spain does not produce, and could not now buy abroad, the necessary machinery. Great Britain, fuel producer of the Allies, granted her enough coal to keep the war industries running, and little more. Furnaces shut down one by one, and for four winters the population of the Castilian plateau shivered with cold.

Switzerland lives somewhat by manufacture, but more by hotel keeping. From Central France, Germany or Italy, the European could travel to her great mountain playgrounds as cheaply and quickly as can the American of Ohio to the resorts of our New England coast; in summer, to a certain extent in winter, she played host to a floating population numbered by millions. That is one manifestation of our increasing complexity and interdependence. The manufacturing industries proceeded irregularly. Some made huge profits; some shut down. The hotels failed so fast that the Swiss courts finally shut their eyes to the bankruptcy laws. At the famous resort of Grünewald, in the summer of 1917, I was one of ten guests in a great and splendid hotel. No other inn of any consequence had even tried to keep open. A scant producer of any essential foodstuffs except dairy products, and with no sea-

coast of her own, Switzerland was forced virtually to beg bread of the Allies; to grant them such favors as she dared, in face of the German menace, for wheat and potatoes. In 1917, I saw half of Geneva's population marching in procession and yelling as they marched for "bread—bread—bread!" Meanwhile, neutral though she was, she must needs sustain the burden of an army fully mobilized against emergencies. And for the remaining neutrals of Europe, such as Holland and Scandinavia, the burden of other people's wars was even heavier and more lasting.

The Armistice, of course, did not repair the damaged machine. Rather, it gave us opportunity to observe what war does to the complex modern world structure. Of this, international credit furnishes perhaps the best example. Why should a German factory rust, a German workman go cold and hungry, when across one sea are the raw materials which this factory uses crying for markets, and across another sea populations clamoring for the finished product? Because foreign exchange, an elaborate structure built to bring together the German day's work, the American day's work, the Peruvian day's work, has been knocked all askew by the war.

Now this disorganization, with its heavy ultimate costs, affects both victor and vanquished. He

who wins must pay for the repairs, as well as he who loses. The increasing interdependence of the world, the third reason and at present perhaps the least for the decreasing profits in victorious warfare, is bound ever to become more important. Though nations new and old have gone mad with nationalism, though jingo statesmen still poke sticks into the machinery, commerce, science and thought go serenely on, binding the parts of the world into a tighter and more complex whole. Military opinion sets the probable date of the next general war about thirty years from the end of the "first world war"—say 1950. By then, the nations may be as closely joined as the Siamese Twins—you cannot cut the bonds which unite them without killing one or both.

No, so far as highly developed peoples are concerned, the rule is established and proved; war does not pay. This, however, does not at present apply to "colonial expeditions" and raids on the resources of backward neighbors. Some of these might still return profits on the investment. For example, a small but earnest group of powerful Americans in official life looks forward to the day when we shall grab Mexico. Compared to such wars as we waged in 1917 and 1918, that would be cheap and easy. Mexico lacks the means to create modern equipment on an adequate scale. Our

navy, virtually without opposition, could blockade her coast and keep out foreign supplies. Her armies know only a kind of semi-guerrilla warfare, very irritating to oppose but not in the end effective. Finally, she has only fifteen million people, while we have a hundred and ten million. Nor would the transfer of ownership in Mexico much affect the world machine. She is still out of the main industrial and commercial currents. And the prize of victory is a kingdom of unexploited wealth in minerals, oil, rubber, semi-tropical products generally. South of Mexico lie still other prizes, almost as rich, not so difficult of acquirement. To provoke and carry through a war of conquest on Mexico would pay—at least for a time.

However, this modern world will not much longer hold out such a temptation to greed and violence. Even now the surplus population of Europe, driven forth by the aftermath of war, is flowing to Latin America as once it flowed to English America. In the century between 1820 and 1920, our population grew from 9,600,000 to 105,000,000. Nothing, except perhaps an exclusiveness which grows weaker every day, stands to prevent Latin America from making some such increase. Wealth, and the economic means of fighting wars, will follow; political and economic

conditions will resemble those of the parent continent. By then, opportunity for profitable conquest will have vanished in the Americas, in Africa, probably in Asia, just as in Europe; and the new economic law of war will be established the world over.

Moral reforms all tend to become in the end economic reforms. A small band of far-seeing zealots sees that the thing is wrong; later, all mankind sees that the thing is foolish. Then the movement begins to go with a rush. The early Christians manumitted their slaves because they felt it sacrilegious to buy and sell a human soul. Yet I doubt not that emancipation became general only when men found that slave labor could not, somehow, compete with free labor. We learned that in the United States, as any one knows who has studied the economic causes of the Civil War. The temperance movement, afterward the Prohibition movement, got its irresistible headway only when our people realized that the saloon bred not only moral degradation but economic loss. As religion has some mystical tie with material advancement, morals with effectiveness, so among the forces of darkness sin ever allies itself with folly. When the higher spirits of civilization understand that war is not only wicked but imbecile, we shall begin to make progress

toward peace. And, for reasons upon which I have been expanding in the past two chapters, its folly, its opposition to the creation of a better material world, is in itself the legitimate concern of organized Christianity and organized Judaism.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE HUMAN LOSS

The commonest presentation of the case against war consists in reviewing its purely physical horrors—the heaped-up dead, the groans of the wounded and dying, the corrupted human flesh. And this somewhat sensational and pictorial argument is also at bottom a trifle illogical, which is perhaps the reason why such masterful, realistic descriptions of war as Zola's *La Débâcle,* with its picture of Sedan on the night of the great battle, have failed of their purpose. A battle is only death in mass. Were I, in this present hour of peace, able by some clairvoyance to witness all the contemporaneous deathbed scenes the world over, and by some flash of insight beyond my powers to weave them into one vivid description, I could make a picture as repellent as Zola's. And I could use it as an argument against life itself. Many a young, adventurous soldier has faced death sustained by the thought that if it happens now it will come in a flash, not after the long tossings of sleepless pillows; and that it will come,

too, before life has grown stale to his taste. If sudden extinction of human life in mass were all there is to war, then religion need concern itself merely with preparing the soldiers for a good death.

However, this does not even begin to state the case. Since one object of a broader Christianity is the creation of the Lord's Garden, then the character of the humanity which inhabits that place of delights becomes an object supremely important to the Church. It is possible, and that without any machinelike system of socialized eugenics, to create three hundred years from now a human race vastly superior in physique and mentality to the present imperfect species—a greater percentage of genius and talent, a vastly superior general average. It is equally possible to start the race backward; to have, three hundred years from now, a higher percentage of men and women cursed from their birth by the physical handicaps of cancerous cells, imperfect circulation, defective bones; and by the mental handicap, of idiocy, moronry, neurosis, defective brains. Indeed, this question allies itself closely with the very plainest, strictest and narrowest morals. On the average, sound morals as well as sound minds go with sound bodies. A French surgeon with an investigating turn of mind had studied before the

war a certain class of moral degenerates. He followed their military history, and found that scarcely one had stayed in the army a year. The hardships of the trenches brought out unsuspected flaws in physiological structure. They broke down, and were invalided home.

Science, in the past few years, has discovered much about the laws of animal breeding, and especially human breeding. What these learned savants of laboratory and study know now, the unlettered savants of our stock farms and breed kennels knew long ago; for in this respect, more than in any other, man stands related to the animal kingdom. The toilers of the laboratory now believe that every child has his cast of mind and maximum capacity determined at birth. Environment and education may expand his mental and physical powers up to that capacity—but not an inch further. The making of every genius has gone on centuries before his birth, in the successive matings of capable individuals. True, not every individual in an able strain has genius nor yet extraordinary talent. The Mendelian law of heredity, which causes the traits of an individual to skip so oddly through the generations of his descendants, accounts for that. But on averages, the clever reproduce the clever, the powerful the powerful, the inept the inept. We have been able

to trace the line of a man disguised under the name of Juke, who lived a sodden, worthless, drunken life in the seventeenth century. He married a woman of his own sort, fathered many children. And the line of Jukes, thenceforth, is hung like a gallows tree with thieves and drunkards, shoplifters and prostitutes, morons and idiots. Jonathan Edwards, intelligent, forceful member of the Old New England theocracy, married a good, sound, able woman. Their line has blossomed ever since into ability—literary, political, clerical, scholarly. William Cecil, Lord Burghley was the minister of state responsible for much of Queen Elizabeth's success and glory. He married "the most learned lady of her time." He had relatives almost as able, who married into families marked by ability. In every generation since, the blood of Cecil has produced men with the genius of government. Arthur Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil are the examples in this age. All breeders of fine dogs, horses or cattle work on this principle, mating select individual with select individual to produce the perfect strain. We cannot proceed in this cold-blooded manner with humanity; but we can do much by seeing, through moral influence, that the strong, able and intelligent have children and carry on, while discouraging, so far as compatible with morals and liberty,

the mating of the sickly, the defective, the criminal and the under-brained. Probably, nature has all the time been doing this for us; probably, the average man of any European stock had at the beginning of the twentieth century much more native soundness of body and capacity of mind than the corresponding man of the first century.

Now comes modern war, to reverse this process. Had we been trying to breed the European backward to a race of scrubs, we could have devised no more subtly successful process than the war of 1914–1918, with its preliminaries. Forty or fifty years before, the Continental nations introduced universal conscription. As soon as Great Britain and the United States really got into the war, they were obliged to adopt the same plan or a kindred one. However, the Continental nation had longer dealt with this process; we may best study this reverse breeding by a study of the French, German, Austrian and Italian armies. The conception is at bottom democratic. Since the state gives equal rights to all, it demands equal service. Every citizen must stand ready to fight his country's battles. No longer must the duty of making war be assigned to the dregs of the population, plus the adventurous members of the aristocracy. Having established this, the Continental nations began their era of intense arma-

ment, and put principle into practice. They "called up" all the young men of eighteen or nineteen or twenty, examined them physically and mentally, rejected the hunchbacked, the tuberculous, the dwarfed, the exceptionally stupid; drilled and trained the rest for their standing and reserve armies. During the Great War, the Continental nations called out virtually all of the able-bodied men between fourteen and forty-nine.[1] These were the eugenic flower, on the male side, of all Europe. The inferior specimens were left at home, to find employment in war industries, to prosper, to marry and to breed. The war killed ten million soldiers. It killed soonest and most wantonly the "first-line troops," young men who had not married or who had recently married and as yet produced no children. They were, to the race, a total loss. While statistics on this point are not yet available, probably seventy-five per cent of the unmarried Frenchmen who entered the war as first-line troops never came out. The older men, who had already fathered children, guarded the rear, where the losses were lightest. Everything was so arranged, under the demo-

[1] The conscripts were generally called to the colors at the age of eighteen. The "class of 1918" was only fourteen years old in 1914. The limit of conscription was usually forty-five; men of that age, mobilized in 1914, were forty-nine years old when the war closed.

cratic system of conscription, as to inflict the maximum damage on the breed.

This of course applied only to the male half of the species. Though women died in thousands by shells and bombs, in millions by malnutrition, starvation and massacre, the victims were not selected eugenically. However, certain acute militarist politicians, studying the lessons of the Great War, concluded that the nations had overlooked one mighty aid to history. Blindly and foolishly, they had mobilized only soldiers. To make a nation one hundred per cent effective, it must mobilize everything it has—capital, industrial plants, and especially human material. Munitions, in another war, must not be manufactured by private enterprise. The state must seize what machinery of production it needs, and put it to work under direction of the general staff. Pursuant to this plan, Secretary of War Weeks, early in 1923, imparted a plan for incorporating our factories into the war machine. He did not venture so far—at the time—as to touch on human material. That, doubtless, will come later, when the country has accustomed itself to the idea. Abroad, they have been more frank. There, labor for war work is to be mobilized—rounded up, looked over, examined physically and mentally, to select the best, reject the inferior and de-

fective. Even more than in the late war, women will do the work of making munitions. War factories were a constant object of attack from the air in the World War. But aerial attack was then highly unsatisfactory; only after the Armistice did the aerial torpedo and the wireless-controlled aeroplane make it as accurate as gunfire and far more deadly. Also, there is the new explosive, whatever it may be. The women who fill cartridges, gauge shells, finish the parts of cannon, will be in the front line as much as the armed men. They will die perhaps by millions; and they will be the best young breeding stock on the female side, as the soldiers on the male.

However, it remained for us Americans to put the finishing touch on to the plans for emasculation of our male stock. As every one knows, not only did we weed out our young regiments by physical selection, but we also gave them mental tests. Ignoring the fortuitous factor of education, we looked, so far as psychology is now able, into their basic intelligence. On the results of these tests, we marked them A, B, C, D and E, meaning very superior, superior, average, below average and low. From Class A we made officers. Now statistics of casualties in the European armies show that in spite of every precaution more officers of combat divisions are killed than privates. Out

of class D, we made ditch diggers, laborers on the docks at the rear, road builders. Troops of this class come only occasionally under fire, and suffer but few casualties. As for the class E men —we used them for the same service, or sent them back to civilian life. We did not, however, prohibit their marrying. Even more cleverly than the Europeans, we arranged it so that war should do the uttermost damage to the breed. Of course, we escaped any such devastation of the stock as Europe knows; for the war ended before we had even begun to put forth our maximum effort. But if men of the European races go on with war, which more and more demands the best of everything from the nation that undertakes it, this special American invention will be adopted everywhere.

How much the World War did to set back the European stock we shall not know for a generation. How much it weakened the breed in comparison with other wars we shall never know; we have no vital statistics of former ages. However, one thing seems certain about the future. If we indulge in another general war and still another, our civilization may be so tough a structure that we shall stagger through somehow. Disorganized, poverty-stricken, starving by millions, we may yet carry on. But the breed which made that civiliza-

tion will grow inept, anemic, neurotic; the power and glory will go out of the Caucasian. And leadership in the world will pass to the yellow or the brown. That is the real yellow peril—that the white race, through its truculence and folly, will destroy its ability and accommodatingly step aside.[2]

Since it will go on to the end of our racial history, that blow to the race constitutes the great human loss of the World War. However, there was a lesser immediate loss which, in this first decade after the Armistice, Europe feels already and will feel with increasing keenness so long as our generation shall live. Of the ten million soldiers killed in battle, probably three quarters were less than thirty years old. How much of European talent and genius died thus, before its work began, we shall never know. I stood in the streets of Louvain in August, 1914, watching the advance guard, the shock troops, of the German army. There clumped past a company which glinted back the sun from a hundred pairs of spectacles. Who these men were and whence they

[2] This so-called "eugenic argument" I have discussed at greater length in "The Next War." If I repeat my thought here, it is because I consider this fruit of war so important, and yet so little understood that it must be hammered at every opportunity into the heads of our democracy. To those who are interested, I recommend Dr. David Starr Jordan's "War and the Breed," and Dr. Vernon Kellogg's studies of French army statistics after the Napoleonic wars.

came, I never knew; but they bore the stamp of scholarship. Now I had been living, before I went to the war, near a case of cancer; and I had been thinking much on that unsolved mystery of cell growth and cell anarchy. Also I knew the accomplishments of German scholarship in medical research. The thought flashed into my mind: "Perhaps under one of those ridiculous little round caps there marches the secret of cancer!" If so, it must have died in the seed; that division was all but annihilated at Le Cateau and the Marne.

Here they were, these fresh selected young men of all Europe, going out to die in millions. They had been reared in an age whose zeal for education had made it easy for the man of exceptional talent to get training and a hearing. In their ranks marched the scientific discoverers, the inventors, the poets, the novelists, the painters, the composers, the philosophers of the next generation. But these heralds of the dawn went down to festering death along with the clowns and dolts. Who knows just what we lost—what obscure names which might have been immortal figured under that fatal, taciturn caption, "Killed in Action"? And perhaps one among them—but I have had my dreams of him! He has long haunted my imagination—my Unknown.

At times, I indulge the fancy that I have seen him in the flesh. Down the white road to battle would plod a German battalion droning in four parts a militant song; a British battalion dropping from scrubbed, stolid, red faces a trickle of light banter; a French battalion casting quick, alert glances to right and left; an Italian battalion absorbed in the dramatic importance of the business at hand; an American battalion expressing in a free, careless swing their pioneer feeling that here was a big job to be done and they were going to do it, no matter how disagreeable. From the tumble of bobbing heads, a face would turn suddenly, look for an instant upon me . . . fade back into the mass as the steady beat of the column carried on past. Thrilled with a sense of its potential young power, chilled with a vision of what it might be like before the night of battle fell, always I remembered that face for days. Especially the eyes. Whether they were black of the South, blue of the North, hazel of the Midi, they glinted with a cosmic activity and yet held level with an infinite, pregnant stillness. The look with which they regarded me, the stranger, was akin to curiosity only as love is akin to lust, faith to credulity. It was not my appearance, my clothes, the reasons for my presence there by the roadside which raised wonder in him; he was

searching rather for my place and his in this tangled scheme. Those still eyes, of whose power he was not yet aware, looked through the surface of things to the soul beneath. . . . The column would fade into the mists near that disturbed, dusty sky, that intermittent rattle of a million explosions, which is the horizon of battle.

Yet whether I have seen him or no, I try sometimes to reconstruct the life of my Unknown, to describe for myself not only what kind of mature man he might have been, but what kind of child, boy and youth he really was. I think that he came of the sturdy European yeoman stock which has for ten centuries blossomed into that rarest flower of genius, the man who remakes worlds. From such antecedents sprang Italy's Garibaldi, France's Pasteur, our Lincoln, the world's Shakespeare. The same stock, two or three generations removed from the soil, produced Goethe, Darwin, Erasmus. As a child, he played before some miner's cottage in Silesia or Wales, Pennsylvania or Flanders; some farmhouse in the blue Vosges, the green Pentlands or the tawny Appennines; some wayside inn by a broad highway across the American plains, the English valleys, the Russian steppes. The rest of his life I see a little more definitely and certainly. His schoolmasters, very probably, felt a trifle irritated

with him because he could learn and often would not. At least he would not learn, up to his capacity, unless the subject touched his whimsical interest. However, at some time in this serene youth of his a teacher wiser than the rest observed him reading a book above the understanding general to his years, or working with amazing intentness at a self-appointed task, and said to himself: "Perhaps this is an unusual boy after all. . . ."

Because his parents had struggled up to an existence with a margin above bare necessity, because the sturdy people of the soil value learning even above its deserts, he went on to Gymnase or Lycée or High School. I am not sure that he stood always at the head of his class, or won all the prizes. It takes longer to dam a great river than a brook. But here, more of his elders must have noted the original attack of his mind on new problems, and wondered if he would not go far. Perhaps during that disturbed period when adolescence is blundering into manhood, he was driven by a devil of nervous energy which vented itself in strange pranks. It is much more likely that he was still and moody; only with a pregnant stillness, "like that of a spinning top." Probably, his schoolmates scarcely noticed him at all; though had he lived to fulfillment and honored age, they would have written in their reminis-

cences of him, "We always realized that he was unusual."

The year 1914—or perhaps 1917—found him at last out of school, his feet on the lower rungs of some technical or professional career; by now, people in general had begun to perceive an exceptional quality in him, and to prophesy a career. He had, probably a good, stalwart body—twenty generations bred close to the soil had attended to that. Great souls and minds sometimes gleam from frail settings—as Alexander Pope, Robert Louis Stevenson, Heinrich Heine. However, they are the exceptions. It takes mighty thews to carry a mighty soul. Washington and Lincoln were the outstanding athletes of their region and time, Shakespeare was "marvelous well formed." So, when the long peace broke into the Great War, my Unknown marched away with the rest. If he was a Frenchman, a German or an Italian, he had no choice in the matter. If he was a Briton or an American, I think he volunteered in the first wave. He would do that, naturally, having the courage which is so large an element in greatness.

Had the sergeant come to Stratford-on-Avon at about 1585, seeking recruits for the Queen, his eye might have lit on a well-formed, likely looking lad, son of Alderman Shakespeare. But would the village think of sending Will to the wars? Not

at all; Will was a scholar, as Stratford knew scholarship. If he would only turn his mind to serious things, the vicar averred, he might grow great in the Church; and the schoolmaster proclaimed abroad that he translated Ovid so well —and in English rhymes, too—that the translation scarce yielded to the original. War was for gentlefolk and for lads who would not settle down or were good for naught else. It was not for such as Will. What a protest would have gone up from a cloister of Deventer if any one had tried to put a uniform on that promising young scholar, Erasmus! But the nations do things more thoroughly in these days; "the better the man, the better his duty." My Unknown of 1914 marched away with the rest, and the village cheered.

Then one, two or three years of misery and hardening and alternate waves of exaltation, disgust, sickening weariness, halting fear. I fancy, somehow, that my Unknown remained in the ranks to the end. His talents were not military; he had no ambition to lead in that way. But in the long leisures of nights on guard under the flare lights, of loafing in the rest stations, that dynamic, half-controlled mind of his was thinking, thinking. And one day some significant incident, some unconsidered remark of a comrade, some line flashing from a soiled, month-old newspaper, struck a

spark from that subconscious entity in which lies the secret of creation. Dimly amidst the thoughts large but vague which crowded all his waking hours, he began to form his plan. Thenceforth, as he stood in the listening post, eyes and ears on the alert, as he lay awake in the filth and stench of the dugout with the shells bursting in dull explosions outside, as he plodded down the dusty roads under the dustier burden of his pack, he got a kind of happiness by building his own future and that, so closely linked, of the world. Happiness! That joy of young creation rose now and then to ecstasy. Sometimes, but that the eye of his officer was upon him, he could have tossed his arms upward to the Heavens, defied the stars. . . .

Thought and happiness ended one day in a single blinding flash. The power invincible fell from the heavens. In due time, the formal notice came to his mother—"died in action"—for the Patrie, his country, the Czar, the Fatherland or the King. The seal was put upon his destiny. He was forever the Unknown.

Not, in all human probability, one of the Unknown who were buried like kings by the great Allied Nations. There are but five of these; and ten million men died in the Great War. So the chances are two million to one against that. No,

he does not lie under the abbey where roars the loud industry of London, nor at the head of the great, starry avenue where the arch crowns the grace of Paris, nor in the Victor Emmanuel monument where the eyes of the dead may behold the grandeur that was Rome, nor where the serrated spires rise above comely Brussels, nor yet over the calm Potomac, where wide lawns and Indian woods break into a vista of stately Washington. No crowds have wept and cheered about his tomb, no Field Marshals have laid upon it the decorations of valor. As I may have seen him in the flesh, so I may have seen his grave. Perhaps it is only a sunken trench in the old battlefields—one of those trenches where they died too fast for decent burial, where the unaccustomed visitor used to turn his eyes away from the obscene bits of festering human flesh. His may have been among those bleached rib bones which, six months after the guns were stilled, strewed Vimy Ridge or the blasted fields about Verdun. More likely, his grave lies obscurely among those prairies of uniform crosses about Douamont or Ypres or Rheims, or in one of those little, fenced cemeteries which fringe the Carso and the Polish border. If so, the cross bears his regiment, the day when he fell, his name. But he is nevertheless eternally unknown.

Except perhaps to one. I think that his mother, when the war was over, came from far to visit all that remains to memorialize him. And probably the divine intuition granted to the quality of motherhood had made her see long before. She always knew; as did Mary Arden when her Will spoke sometimes from his long meditation under the rosebushes of her Stratford garden, or as Nancy Hanks knew when her Abraham, reading beside a pine-knot blaze, looked up at her sometimes with those strange, angelic eyes. She knows; but she alone.

Who was he? I cannot tell; but I can tell what he was. He was that benevolent master of human destinies created once in an age to lead his world a stage higher. He was a Moses not for one tribe but for all the tribes of men; he was William the Silent; he was Lincoln. The age into which he was born had its own special need of him; as the raw materials of his divine craft are always ready for the hand of genius. Here was a world suddenly hectic with prosperity, sick with undigested or ill-distributed wealth, and mad with nationalism; a world preparing for the greatest of all wars and yet, unknown to the generality, in a stage of humanity when war had no longer any apology for existence. He was the one man in a

century born with the insight to behold things as they are and the force to solidify his misty imaginings into accomplishment. He it was whose vision would have found the formula by which men of different tribes, tongues and creeds may get along together in this world, and whose force of character would have infused that formula with life. Had war granted him forty more years, we should have sepulchred him above kings.

For want of him, old men, set in the intellectual fashions of a past, unnatural age, try to govern and control a new world on political beliefs as dead as witchcraft. For want of him, the young waste in sickly "art movements" or pointless, purposeless, headless rebellions, that energy which might transform civilization. For want of him, Europe drifts toward the shoals of inaction or the rapids of destruction. The war, which took three hundred billions of treasure and ten million lesser lives, took also him. And he, the master genius Unknown who died before his work had begun—he is perhaps the supreme tragedy of it all.

## CHAPTER X

### JUSTICE BETWEEN NATIONS

All this is what the Voice says to me. I translate it poorly. I have only words, and He who Speaks conveys His thought with vibrations of the infinite beyond my dull perceptions. But my imperfect rendition proceeds not from any lack of conviction. Through four years at front and rear, among marching regiments and rioting crowds, in squalid trenches and splendid chancelleries, I saw the face of war. I know that it is useless, foolish, serving no good end of the spirit; I know that it hampers all righteous causes; and I know that if man ever reacts to peace with even a shade of the enthusiasm evoked in him by war, he can prevent it forever.

That is the point—it can be prevented. Were it a mysterious calamity beyond human control, like an earthquake, there would be no more to say. Once, we did consider it inevitable—just as we considered the periodic outbreaks of Plague. But recently we have found in a tiny flea which infects rats the cause of that disease. And now,

in all civilized lands, the Plague is finished. Even before 1914, men of good-will who passed often as irresponsible cranks were studying the causes of war, and the means of prevention. The calamity itself immeasurably quickened that study. No longer did despised pioneers alone undertake it, but esteemed and powerful statesmen like Bourgeois in France, Branting in Sweden, Cecil in England, Root and Wilson in the United States. Millions in every nation—a minority but still a most intelligent one—burned with the conviction that war had become outworn, that society must eliminate the duello from its international processes, as it had long ago eliminated trial by battle from its legal processes. No such outburst against this venerable institution had ever before followed one of the great "periodic upheavals." It seemed possible that this disease of society, like certain diseases of individuals, generated at its most acute stage its own antitoxin.

These students of the great international disease found the root of war of the same structure as that of most crime—just unchecked human greed. The scientific militarists of the nineteenth century had a sound thought in their phrase, "inescapable economic conflict." Between nations, as between individuals, economic conflicts arise continually. The increasing intercommunication

of the world renders them ever more common. But those conflicts, as between individuals, now seldom lead to duels. We outlawed long ago the process of shooting, bludgeoning or stabbing to determine which owned the ox, which had the right to the spring, where the line fence ran. Now how did we accomplish all that? Well, in the first place the tribe, duchy or nation agreed to the proposition that this kind of thing would not do. Then haltingly, irregularly, mixing wisdom with all kinds of superstition and folly, rulers or peoples or both drew up the rules of the game, established penalties for their violation. This in itself did not stop the trouble, of course; men still had their economic conflicts. So the tribes, duchies or nations invented "justice." They set up courts where men skilled in the rules of the game and elected by the majority or appointed by the ruling power, settled these conflicts without riot, bloodshed or disturbance. He who now denies the validity of this process we call an anarchist or a criminal; and in one view a criminal is only a throwback to the psychology of some savage who lived before the law. Society has never found any other means to enforce economic order; to check and eliminate the crimes of greed.

How has it been with nations? Let us invent an example. In the nineteenth century, Ruritania

was drawing raw materials for a certain valuable product from a district down in Africa. Ruritania had been first to see and exploit this promising region, advancing money to its chiefs, monopolizing its concessions, finally throwing about it a "protectorate" which somewhat resembled the protectorate of a thief over his stolen goods. Under the ordinary human code of right and wrong, this sort of thing would figure as illegal, unfair, criminal. And so the chiefs, headmen and populace of the little district down in Africa considered it. But what could they do? Their weapons were flintlock guns and out-dated horse pistols, while the Ruritanians fought with repeating rifles, machine guns, cannon. Had the African tribe and Ruritania been individuals, the Africans when this process began, would have gone to court with their grievance; and the judge or jury which denied them justice would have branded itself as corrupt—an exception in modern society. But nations had no court. The Africans must endure exploitation as best they might.

Presently Ruritania's neighbor, Lusitania, starts to manufacture that same product. She wants some of that indispensable raw material. She sends agents among the natives, begins to arm them; buys concessions on her own account. Ruritania was there first. She makes a great deal

of noise about her rights. So does Lusitania. As between them, which is right and which wrong? Probably they are both wrong. But there is none to say. We have an alleged art or science called international law. Better might it be called international etiquette. On the point at issue, as on most controversies which really affect human life, international law is silent or hazy. But even were this point covered—who shall judge? The Hague Tribunal? The Ruritanians and Lusitanians laugh at that. A somewhat amorphic body, its decisions finally come down always to the judgment of one man. He, of course, is a citizen of some nation. Not a nation on earth, now, but holds commercial or diplomatic relations with one disputant or the other, and regards it with undue fear or undue esteem. Besides—what is the Hague Tribunal anyway? The conference which created it was born of a mystical mood in that crowned fool, the Czar of Russia. No one in diplomatic life took it seriously. The Tribunal of Arbitration served to still the increasing public clamor against militarism, and harmed no one. But as for referring to it a question of national honor!

For by now, honor is evoked. Lusitania cannot honorably withdraw. Ruritania has been insulted in her sovereignty. Once, I looked into forty or more murders among New York bootleggers. Of

course, the law does not protect illicit stores of alcoholic liquors. The bootlegger must defend his property with his own good right arm, his own intensive armament. Now I found, as I suspected I would, that the original cause of each murder was a row over division of the spoils; but the occasion which see the automatics go pumping along Mott Street or Baxter Street was usually a point of personal honor. The sensational press magnifies small incidents into major offenses. The fleets and armies get ready to mobilize. Finally, one of two things happens. The diplomats of the two hostile powers may get together and after much jockeying, falsifying and lying, arrange that one or the other shall withdraw and forget honor—for a consideration. The price is probably a license to do something else which private business would consider crooked and ruthless, like creating a new "sphere of influence" over people who do not want to be influenced. Otherwise—they begin shooting and keep on shooting until the national honor of one side has been satisfied and the other side is merely the loser. In human terms of plain people: from fraud, chicanery and trespass, Ruritania and Lusitania have proceeded unchecked to highway robbery and murder. Understand, I am not giving under disguised names any actual occurrence. I am merely in-

venting an instance which is typical of the way things went between nations in the Nineteenth Century and which strips the brass buttons, gold lace and decorations off from modern war.

Now were there coded and recognized law between nations, were there international courts delivering even-handed justice, finally were nations accustomed, like individuals, to settle their differences by litigation in these courts, the great Ruritanian-Lusitanian war, which left both nations poorer and ruined even the African province, would have been settled in a fortnight and settled with at least an approximation of justice to all. Indeed, it would have been settled many years before the crisis, when it was still a mere police court case.

Men of good-will, of common sense, even of genius, have been studying the question ever since the Armistice, and none has found a better way. One by one, the old, half-hearted measures have been dismissed as illusory or impracticable. Isolation? That is swimming against the current of history. The trend of the past three hundred years has flowed from isolation toward intercommunication. But even if you are self-sufficient like the United States, and throw about yourself a Chinese wall, you do nothing to prevent attack from without. Sooner or later, your treasure

houses will attract the thieves. It is moreover, an essentially un-Christian process, implying that your own people are the only ones who merit salvation, that the rest of humanity may burn in Hell for all you care.

Perfect defensive preparation? Never in history has that, in the long run, averted war. Rather has it invited war. It merely starts up intensive preparation for defense in some rival nation or nations. There follows such a situation as prevailed in Europe during the early twentieth century; peoples armed to the teeth, waiting in fear and trembling to defend themselves when the other side strikes. Preparedness has been described as "insurance." It is insurance indeed, but not against war; just against defeat in war.

The only method that ever succeeded has consisted in friendly discussion, while the cause of conflict was still young. By that method, we have kept reasonable peace in the Americas. The Conference on Limitation of Armament in 1921 averted or at least delayed a useless and expensive war on the Pacific. The present League of Nations, imperfect though it be through absence of Germany, Russia and, especially, the powerful United States, has yet nipped in the bud several quarrels which might have grown into wars a decade or so hence. The problem is to make this

method of settling disputes customary and, in the end, universally compulsory; and to create behind it a real international law so that any nation may know, as any individual may know, when according to the mature judgment of mankind a given act constitutes a crime or misdemeanor. Several proposals to this end clamor for the recognition of American voters. Any one of them is better than nothing. Perhaps it matters little how we start, so long as we do start. Any new experiment in government emerges from its embryo a thing transformed. This feature which looked so promising, proves on trial impracticable; that which seemed so unimportant, turns out to be the keystone of the whole structure. The greatest danger lies in hesitation and inaction. For time works with the militarists. While we hesitate, fearing to venture, tiny quarrels and irritations are growing toward little wars, greater wars, finally the great general war in which the destructive inventions of man may end our civilization.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE THING THAT IS GOD'S

However, mankind will never abolish war until it ceases to want war. Along with any organization of nations to keep the peace must go a progressive education of public opinion. Of course, nineteen out of twenty people do want permanent peace, or think they do. But do they want hard enough? Are they willing to forego the not unpleasant emotion of hate, to resist the temptations of temporary national advantage, to shut their hearts to certain old stirrings of the cave instinct? We have some distance yet to go before the citizens of our Christian democracies make permanent peace a main object of their political thinking.

"You cannot change the nature of man," say the militarists, repeating parrotlike a phrase, as the anti-suffragists used to repeat: "Woman's place is in the home." That, probably, is not entirely true. Green has called attention to the change which came over England in the Elizabethan period. Before that time, he says in effect, we find it hard to understand either

English statesmanship or the English popular mind. We know that they did certain things, but we cannot fully understand why. However from Cecil on, the mental operations of any English politician are as clear to us as those of the contemporary Gladstone or Disraeli. In this period, he concludes, the psychology of Englishmen underwent a subtle transformation. And Ludwig Lewisohn has given the perfect answer. "Perhaps we cannot change the nature of man," he says, "but we can change his mood." In war, we do that very thing. Six months after the first shot sounds, any belligerent people turns from tolerance to hate, confidence to suspicion, sanity to madness. The problem consists in casting human thought into a new mould, and making the work permanent.

Yet the task, as I review this Christendom of ours, seems overwhelmingly great and difficult. Beside it the long struggle for government by the people was slight and easy. How shall we go about it? What common instrument is large enough, fine enough, powerful enough, so to regroup the faculties of men? One alone in all the world—Christianity and her elder sister, Judaism. Here alone is a power which, consciously or unconsciously, governs the moral thought of every man and woman in fifty nations. Church attendance may

be falling off; peoples may be taking their religion with less literal, outward show of seriousness; but rare nevertheless is that man or woman who did not receive Christian or Jewish religious instruction in childhood; and, therefore, who does not see moral issues, all his life long, through the lenses of the Decalogue. And divided though the Church be by sects, it is not divided by nationalities. We call one branch, perhaps, the Church of England, another the Church of Scotland, another the Church of Rome. These are but the names of places where grow the parent stems. Every one of these has established its offshoots in many nations. Considered in their political aspect, churches are the only organizations which had achieved a sound and decent internationalism. And for ages upon ages, the Church has been gathering experience with the changing mood of man. The phenomenon of conversion is little else. What an instrument for achieving permanent peace! We should work through many and many a weary generation before creating another half so well adapted to the purpose.

If all the Christian sects, combining with one another and with Judaism on this single issue, should start the work of educating their sons and daughters in the illusion and immorality of war, we should within a year mark the changing mood

of man. Within twenty years, when the generation, at present learning its texts and catechism in Sunday school, reached the age of fruition, the job of bringing peace to our world would be done. The Church can do it, even if she confines herself to her oldest policy—just personal work with the individual.

Let the doubter consider our great American example. Seventy-five years ago, we were a race of easy and careless drunkards. One strong division of the Christian churches in America began gradually to take up the temperance question. The nineteenth century had run half its course before any of them, as bodies, endorsed teetotalism. It was later even than that when certain denominations began to give systematic temperance instruction in the Sunday schools. Still later, the movement came firmly into politics; the idea of prohibiting alcoholic liquor by law became a definite issue. In the early years of the twentieth century, it went with a rush. State after state voted dry. And this was precisely the era when the children who had received temperance instruction in the Sunday schools came to the age of political influence. With the idea that stealing, murder and adultery are wrong, they had absorbed the idea that alcoholic drink is wrong. It was part of their moral equipment.

Not otherwise must the Church proceed when, if ever, she takes up this new and most vital moral reform. She must begin it in early childhood, when one gets his basic moral ideas. She has taught her young sons and daughters that good citizenship is a Christian duty; she must teach them now that perfect citizenship implies tolerance; that suspicion and generalized hatred are part of the old Adam in man; that the pledge of love and service which the Christian takes at his baptism or confirmation embraces all mankind—the whole population of the City of God. She must teach that war is not really glorious, but a calamity; that behind it lies always a large wickedness. She must teach, finally, that to be Christ's faithful soldier means, in this age, to be a soldier of peace. A few individual congregations, a very few denominations, do all this already; even if no more join in the work, we shall feel the effect fifteen or twenty years from now; and those who see merely the outside of things will wonder at a sudden "pacifist wave."

Plow work, that, but most necessary. Cultivating and harvesting call for more complex tools, more advanced methods. How shall organized religion, having set its face against war, proceed in the face of recurrent national crises? "Let the Church keep out of politics," says one con-

servative school of Christian thought. Which is all very well, when politics concern themselves solely with the things that are Caesar's. Theocracies and church parties never fitted well into the structure of human society, and are wholly out of place in democracies. But when a political issue involves a thing that is God's, the Church has seldom held aloof. In medieval times, before Christianity was divided, the Pope laid interdicts on sovereigns and peoples guilty of gross treacheries and wickedness. When Great Britain was discussing abolition of slavery in her colonies, Established and Non-conformist congregations by thousands declared for abolition and backed it by their votes. Taking a small and rather mean example, when various of our states have proposed to exempt church property from taxation, or to revoke an exemption already existing, the churches have thrown themselves into the fight. For a larger and more recent example: when the prohibition movement began to gather headway, part of our denominations gave it their frank indorsement, conveyed to their members that to vote for any man who favored the saloon constituted a violation of church discipline. And this war against war is a moral question if there ever was one; it ceased, somewhere in the nineteenth century, to become Caesar's; it became God's.

No impartial and informed witness of international affairs doubts that world organization to replace trial by battle with trial by jury and to outlaw war, is the first necessary step. Yet the American advocates of this method halt and hesitate between several conflicting schemes. If our churches as a whole ever reach agreement on one plan, give it their official indorsement and their faithful service, the job will be done. The politicians of all parties will fall over each other in their eagerness to get into their platforms. Just so, when the prohibition agitation received the official indorsement of many powerful churches, certain candidates of both great parties who themselves drank a quart of straight whisky a day, took the platform to denounce the liquor traffic. The German vote, the labor vote, the farmer vote, are all insignificant numerically beside the church vote; which every politician knows.

No judicious man believes that when we have founded some firm, workable society or association or league of nations to administer real international law, the task is done. No mere agreement, no mere gesture of good-will, can in a flash eliminate one of the oldest customs known to society. It will have many devils to fight—of greed, of intrigue, of self-interest masked as

patriotism, of political superstition. It cannot work perfectly at first. No new form of government ever did. The world will have its moments of a disgust which passes for disillusion. Those are the times that will try the souls of good men, and precisely the times when such an international force as organized Christianity may do its best service. Hatreds, unreasoning hatreds based mostly on lies, will be then as now the best weapon of those who do not desire peace. The special task of the Church will be to quell such hatreds—to prove their folly, to expose their basis of insincerity and falsehood.

I might even wish that the Church would spread some benevolent influence over my own profession. "News is sin," says Mr. Dooley, "and sin is news." Because of psychological processes too long to describe here, violence in journalism gets from the public in general a quicker response than sanity. Now that world issues have become part of our reading habit, journalism is under constant temptation to gain circulation by hinting at plots against our own national sovereignty, by raising the primitive blood instinct. Such journalism can be suppressed or discouraged only when the leadership of the community it serves refuses to patronize it. In the past, merchants have often withdrawn their advertising patronage from a

newspaper which printed facts considered detrimental to the business interests. That is bad; it strikes indirectly at the liberty of the press, and amounts to an unwarranted use of wealth. But there is no conceivable immorality in refusing to subscribe for a journal whose news columns disseminate harmful lies. A general church boycott on a war-mongering newspaper here and there might serve as a gentle moral tonic to the whole profession.

Indeed, every journalist knows that news tastes in the public can be changed by a little art combined with persistence. A certain city editor of a New York newspaper once made an experiment to prove this point. He asked himself first what big activity least interested the average American, and decided that it was the art of painting. We are not—or were not then—an artistic people. So he chose that for his experiment. He began to set the most interesting writers he could command to the task of reporting the current exhibitions, describing the masterpieces of the museums and the private collections, gossiping about the technical methods of eminent painters. Within two years, he had made his art department a "circulation builder." Just so, if the Church will work with journalism and journalism with the Church, we may create a new kind of foreign news—under-

standing in place of suspicision, reasonable admiration in place of contempt, proportionate truth in place of distortion or half truth.

The possible methods are of an infinite variety. The necessary thing is for the Church to know conversion, to get a new heart. Oh, for a leader now —an Amos, a Hildebrand, an Augustine, a Wesley! Perhaps that predestined leader was my Unknown, killed obscurely in the Great War. Perhaps in default of the lost leader, the Church must proceed by the best method that remains; organization to make small units a mighty whole.

If the Church refuses to hear this call to new and higher service, one of two things will happen. Either our civilization will go on to another world war and then another and perish of its own mad efficiency, or men and women of goodwill the world over will painfully organize, for this job of ending war, a new world-expression of man's moral force. And this, whatever it call itself, whatever form it take, will be Christian in spirit, harmonizing with the majestic purposes of God. But what an indictment of our churches! The historian of 2200 A.D., reviewing events in their true perspective, may write that unchurched men and women did this thing in the spirit of Christ, unhelped—nay, hampered and criticized—by the pledged and anointed servants of Christ!

## CHAPTER XII

### PAS-DE-CALAIS, 1918

The war was almost over; only that morning a British staff officer had run out of his quarters shouting like a boy and waving at me, with an extravagance of gesture almost Latin, a sheet of manifold paper. I snatched it from his hands. Austria had abandoned the war and asked for terms! As we pushed obliquely forward, picking and choosing intact roads for our somewhat shaky and war-worn automobile, I scattered the news, watched French faces break into ripples of excited emotion, English faces lighten with a slow smile. There were those, however, from whom we kept our joyful secret. The horizon to north and east still reverberated; still the roads fed the weary battalions into that slaughter mill. These survivors of Armageddon were no longer boy-soldiers, but mature men—hard-bitted, bronzed, lean, but drawn in the face with years of strain. To tell them was only to mock them; for many who marched forward that day, the Peace would come too late.

We four—the Mayor, the Red Cross Major, the French Captain and I—were ourselves harbingers of peace. The Allied armies were going forward; village after village, but last spring locked tight within the German lines, had been rendered back to France. The government had detached the Captain from his combat battalion and sent him to do the preliminary work of restoring normal life. The Red Cross Major had joined the expedition in order to see what America could do. We had picked up the Mayor at Arras. The most substantial citizen of his village in the Pas-de-Calais, he had stayed by when the Germans entered. In 1916, however, the invaders had cleaned out the inhabitants, repatriated them through Switzerland. He was going back now for the first time. He expected little; he knew that this town—whose name refuses to come out from the dark caverns of my war memories—had been a "center of defense" in the rear works of the Hindenburg line.

As for the Captain, he seemed to me after three days' acquaintance the very flower of European civilization. In private life, as I learned afterward, he bore an old title of nobility. But he had not rested on the glories of his ancestors. His Legion of Honor he had won long before the war, for brilliant work as a colonial administrator and

organizer. He spoke on all things with a fine, mature wisdom, shot by engaging flashes of a subtle French wit. He approached staff officers and peasants with the same easy courtesy, the same Gallic sense of personal equality.

At last, cutting with many difficulties and disputes through the rear transport of a British division, we drew up our automobile behind the camouflage of a broken wall, and stood in the Mayor's town. Or what had been his town. The Mayor himself, who had been born in a cottage on the main street, who thought he knew every stone, spent half an hour orienting himself. That foundation on a rise of ground must have been his house, he determined. That standing brick wall was probably his brewery—no, on second inspection it might be the common granary. We climbed over the hillocks of ruin, the Mayor muttering puzzled comments and question under his breath; stood at last on the highest mound of all. From the mass of ground brick, desiccated mortar, dust and filth, protruded a jagged bit of broken marble. I picked it up; it bore a few letters of inscription.

"Ah!" said the Mayor. "Now I know! That is a piece of the memorial tablet to my father-in-law. This must have been the church!" With this new orientation, he and the Red Cross worker

started on another voyage of exploration. But the Captain and I still stood on this point of vantage, held to the scene before us by the very fascination of disgust. Of the town itself remained neither building nor definite street. A sliver of wall stood here and there; the rest was a series of confused mounds. To right lay a space more open and less littered than the rest; and there my eye stopped on a set of human rib bones. They were bleached white; they could not be remains of the newly dead. . . . Ah, that had been the churchyard; these were the old dead, arisen at the trump of the Devil's resurrection. All round the little knoll on which stood the village, the Germans had run a line of dugouts, half of them now blown open. The wooden sills and lintels of the nearest was charred. Before it lay a German helmet. Later, after inspecting its surroundings to make sure it was not the trigger of a booby trap, I picked up that helmet and kept it among my few war souvenirs. For at the top, the hard enamel paint is burned and blistered away. The conquerers had cleaned out this dugout with liquid flame; the dead German who wore it. . . .

Beyond, stretched an insane landscape. Four years ago, these were most fertile fields, their little, checkerboarded patches bearing the record

crops of Europe in grain, sugar beets, potatoes. Down the tree-shaded roads plodded the great French draft horses, heroically big, luxuriously fat, hauling this produce to the thriving market towns. All along the horizon, the steeples of neat peasant villages rose from clumps of trees.

Now—even the soil was gone; blown away down to the dirty clay subsoil. There remained neither road nor tree nor village. In their place ran a grotesque network of fallen, broken, military works. Here and there the trenches deepened into gullies where you might have hidden a mansion. Over all lay strewn the dunnage and offal of a city dump—artillery wheels, junked ambulances, broken cannon, old clothes and shoes, broken, rusty bayonets and rifles. Through my glasses, I could pick up even more sinister remains of old battles—skulls and thigh bones. The burial squads, following our advance, had attended only to the newly dead. These were emptyings from the trench graves of four years, redug by intensive shell fire. Near the horizon would break out here and there a metallic flash, followed by a distant shaking reverberation. These were our heavies, creating more desolation in intact fields fifteen miles beyond. An aeroplane droned monotonously overhead, and a sheet of tattered corrugated iron, by some whim of battle still at-

tached to a shattered wall, clanged dismally in the autumn wind.

I turned to the Captain. From his six-feet-three of stalwart height he was looking down on me. He first broke the silence.

"Isn't it all foolish!" he said.

"It is," said I. "It must be stopped."

He shrugged his shoulders, French fashion.

"How can it be stopped?" he asked. "Look—my hobby is the ancient Greek philosophers. Their works and commentaries upon them fill half of my library. I read them constantly. And I cannot see that the moral nature of man has improved in these two thousand years. No! This is folly, folly, but man cannot make it cease. It can't be done."

We had been speaking French. Somehow, I did not care to dispute the question with him there and then; but I gave my answer to myself, under my breath and in my own tongue.

"It can be done!" said I.

Then I forgot desolation in the burst of a new idea. I had stated in four words the American creed. That was the thing for which I had been searching all these war years. As I watched European peoples, penetrated the European mind, my native conceit in my own country had sustained many a shock. There were, for example,

the little red schoolhouse and the peerless American university. I had discovered that the average French or German carries into his university a better equipment for thought than the average American graduate carries away. I had once despised the education of Oxford and Cambridge, while admiring the graces and beauties of their scholastic life. Now I perceived the fluidity of mind, the real capacity, somehow developed in the Briton by his universities. I noted that the average Frenchman in the ranks understood that the Great War had a mightily complex origin; while the American doughboy said "The Kaiser started it" and dismissed further thought on the subject. Yet something not yet formulated had sustained my national pride. We possessed a virtue of character which they lacked. What was it? This interchange with my French captain had draw it from me—the expression of our greatest national quality—"it can be done."

While they hesitate, bound by tradition, fettered by their very complexity, we look the problem in the face, and set ourselves to solve it. We dared in the beginning to say that we were done with kings; for a century, nation after nation has been following our lead. That, so far, is our contribution to civilization. In face of the fall of the Dutch Republic, the early eclipse of the Puri-

tan Republic, we said "It can be done"—and it was done. We were only a fringe of white settlers on the edge of an untamed wilderness larger than Western Europe. In a century we made it an ordered modern nation. Our national will did that, our mental and moral courage, our refusal to believe that any obstacle was insuperable. I realized, looking that morning over the blasted fields of Pas-de-Calais, that if any spiritual force ever ended war, it would be this quality in the American. Only dimly did I perceive then what now I know; that these United States had been by a turn of fate thrown into the position of dominant nation. I see now that Empire of the old, sordid kind is ours if we wish it; but also that we have the opportunity to create a new and finer thing—an Empire of the spirit which will lift mankind to a new plane of progress. We have only to say, as we said in the face of kings, of unnumbered perils and obstacles in the untrodden wilderness, "it can be done."

But now, five years after the Armistice, we hesitate, afraid of thin phantoms. We listen to the counsels of narrow and false self-interest. We let the withered hands of old, timid men, whose capacity for new thought died thirty years ago, blot the bright scroll of resolution. I do not know my America in this period. Has our soul sud-

denly gone flabby? Or are we only blind? And what can toughen our soul, open our eyes, save that power which has wrought conversion and borne light these twenty centuries?

(1)

THE END